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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THROUGH THE NIGHT.]

GRAND COURT.

BY THE

Author of "Sometimes Sapphire, Sometimes Pale," &c.

CHAPTER XVII.

I am so filled with unrest to-night,
I sit by the window and watch the light
Grow dim and faint in the western skies,
And my heart beats low, and my lips breathe sighs.
The last faint beam in the west has fled.
The stars come forth, the day is dead. —Markwell.

"Is Norah come?"

The words were not at first articulate on the lips of Viola, but those lovely lips trembled and grew pale, and the large hazel eyes dilated with affright when she saw that a stranger descended from the carriage—an individual wrapped in a great coat, with a plaid scarf tied across his chest—a pale, broad face, and white hat on his head. The servant man looked up aghast at this vulgar, swaggering figure, and almost seemed to hesitate about admitting it into the spotless, handsome hall, with its great scented flower-jars and reliques of past fashions and refinements. The man staggered in, however, as bold as a trooper, and as much at his ease as though he were a first cousin of the haughty old mistress of the mansion. He stared at Viola, and a leer of admiration lighted up his insolent black eyes. He was a man on the verge of forty, with a face that might have been handsome but for the signs of intemperance and brutal self-indulgence, which were manifest in its every line.

The man who approached the delicate Lady Viola Beaumont, and who held out his hand to the proud earl's child with the easy familiarity of an equal, was, it was easy for a man of the world to perceive, a brawler in low society, a man who gambled, and cursed and swore and lived in open defiance of the laws of heaven and the respect of good men. Peter, the manservant, knew enough of the world to read him at a glance. "What in the name of pity, of propriety, of that punctilious decorum, which was one of the chief

characteristics of his old mistress, had induced that worthy lady to send this raffian person home in her close carriage. Viola shrank back when the fellow offered to take her hand, yet she bowed to him courteously enough, with all the politeness of a true lady.

"Where is my sister, sir?" asked the young girl, eagerly.

"You are to get on your things, my lady, and to come with me in Miss Danvers' carriage; it's all been comfortably arranged between the old lady and the governor. Your sister is to accompany you to France; the governor has seen reason in that light at last, and Miss Danvers has herself recommended a good finishing school, which she knows well in the neighbourhood of Paris. She will accompany you herself—and there's a letter from her."

He pulled from his pocket a letter as he spoke, and handed it to Viola.

"But this is so sudden, so strange," said Viola. She broke the seal, and read as follows:

"I HAVE seen Mr. Rokewood, and after a lengthened conversation, we have come to a mutual agreement. He promises not to distress or annoy poor Hammond, on condition that I do not interfere with, or annoy him in connection with your affairs; but do not think that you are to be ill-used; I have represented to him that his great severity towards you bordered on absolute cruelty, and would entail serious consequences on the health of yourself and sister. I wished myself to retain the care of you both, until such time as a letter could reach, and an answer be received, from Colonel Claverhouse, but he objects very strongly.

"He says he feels that you and your sister—romantic girls (excuse me, my dear, but I am afraid most of the young girls of these days are headstrong and imprudent—ah, how different when I was young!)—would be too great a care for me; and perhaps so, for I am but a feeble old woman. I, therefore, propose, that your sister and yourself shall be sent to a school in Rennes, a school for whose excellence I can vouch, kept by the Demoiselles St. Croix, in the Avenue des Champs Elysées. Now, I have

had three nieces, the sisters of Hammond, educated at that school, and more elegant, or better behaved young women, you could never meet with. I am positively willing to travel to France with you, and to consign you to the care of these my old friends. It is all arranged; I must have a few necessaries packed into my black portmanteau. Tell Lisette, she will know what to put in. Granger is at present packing up your things and your sister's, and we shall meet you, and start in a carriage of Mr. Rokewood's. I send mine to bring you on to the London Bridge station, where we shall meet you and start by the evening service. Tell Lisette to give you my purse, with twenty-five sovereigns in it, it will suffice for the week I am absent."

"Poor dear Hammond is wild with anger at this arrangement, but if we must go, he wishes to accompany us. This is quite impossible—I cannot have anything to do with promoting a silly, and romantic attachment between your sister and my nephew; besides all this, he is very ill, and the doctor says he must not leave his room for some days. The countess is really very kind to him, quite thoughtful; she has been sitting with him the greater part of the morning."

"I think, my dears, that you both owe a certain duty to your stepmother—I do indeed."

"Yours, very faithfully, BETTY DANVERS."

Viola glanced up bewildered from the perusal of this strange letter. Who then was the vulgar man in the plaid scarf? not a word was there in reference to him in the epistle of Miss Danvers.

Meanwhile the carriage was driven under shelter.

The stranger, looking insolently upon Viola, said:

"I suppose, my lady, the old lady has not mentioned me in her lengthy epistle; she was a precious long time in writing it; but I must introduce myself. My name is Mr. Anthony Chippenham, and I am the present steward—*factotum*—of Mr. Rokewood. I am to have the honour of conducting you ladies to France," added Anthony with a flourishing bow. "And I hope we may become better acquainted—it sha'n't be my fault if we ain't."

MUSEUM

Mr. Chippenham accompanied these remarks with a leering smile. Viola shrank further than ever from him; a deep distrust of the vulgar man took possession of the young lady. She hurried off to find Lisette, showed her the letter, and asked if that really was the writing of Miss Danvers.

"Oh, yes," Lisette said, "sure enough it was Miss Danvers who had written that—Miss Danvers and none other."

Then Lisette set to work to pack, and a hat, and veil, and travelling-cloak were found for the Lady Viola. When the poor child descended to the dining-room, she found that antique and stately apartment desecrated by the presence of Mr. Anthony Chippenham, who was drinking bottled ale and eating game pie with great gusto; nay, he had even lighted a cigar, and was just about to commence smoking, when Peter rushed into the room.

"Beg your pardon sir, but my mistress would not allow the Prince of Wales himself to smoke in her house; even Mr. Hammond, her favourite of favourites, has to take his cigar in the garden."

Anthony answered, by a loud, brutal laugh.

"Make haste round with the carriage then," he said, "I will have my smoke out there."

Then turning to Lady Viola, he continued:

"You don't object to smoking, do you?"

At another time, Viola would have smiled, but she felt afraid of the man; she could not condescend to him; she knew by instinct that if she descended from her pedestal for one instant, she would have to submit to the coarsest, most insolent familiarity. She murmured something about liking the scent of tobacco in the open air, but having an objection to it when her head ached, as it did at present.

Anthony knocked the ashes out of his cigar.

"I always like to oblige a lady," he said, "especially if she's young and handsome. Now there's the carriage. Come along."

Viola hurried out, thanked the servants, whom it was not in her power to give money to, and took her place in the carriage. Chippenham entered, and off rolled the ill-assorted pair. It rained and rained during all the heavy drive to London, and through the crowded highway from Hammersmith to Kensington. Viola leaned back, closed her eyes, and pretended to sleep, so that she might avoid the rude familiarity of her most odious companion. When the carriage rolled over the London stones, she opened her eyes with more interest.

"Are we going straight to the London Bridge Station, Mr. Chippenham?" she asked, coldly.

"Yes—yes, my lady, straight, straight—where you will probably meet with your sister, and Miss Danvers."

"But if not?" asked Viola.

"Then we shall have to send you on alone," said Anthony; "they might go on and leave you to follow."

Viola was but slightly acquainted with Miss Danvers, and she considered her a very odd person, but the prospect of travelling to France, in company with the man Chippenham, seemed quite dreadful to her. She shrank, and cowered, and had thoughts of opening the door, and throwing herself out. Miss Danvers' purse of twenty-five pounds was in her hands, and on an emergency she would hardly have scrupled to spend a pound or two, in providing a safe shelter for her defenceless head.

She was growing wild with fear by the time she reached the bustle of the station. The coachman descended; he was a respectable servant of Miss Danvers.

"Did your mistress tell you to drive here," asked Viola, suddenly, as she was stepping out into the rain.

The man touched his hat.

"Yes, my lady; that is, the gentleman did that brought me the message, the gentleman at Grosvenor Square."

Viola's heart sunk.

"Are you going back to Chiswick, now?"

"Yes, my lady."

A wild instinct seized Viola to leap back into the carriage, to refuse to stir, to demand to be driven again to Strawberry Lodge.

"Come, my lady," said Anthony, sharply.

The decisive voice broke the half-formed resolution.

Viola was hurried off, and soon found herself amid the crowd of the station, looking eagerly about for Miss Danvers and Norah.

"They are not here," she said. "Oh, where are they?"

Mr. Chippenham replied by a smirk, more odious than usual. He offered his arm to Viola. She shrank away. He burst out in a loud, coarse laugh.

"Please yourself, my lady," he cried; "only it's wet, and I have but one umbrella, and I do not feel inclined to give it up and cross to the other side in this heavy rain. I would far rather give you a shelter, but you are so squeamish."

Viola was well wrapped in a waterproof of Miss Danvers', consequently she did not fear the rain, and she followed Anthony Chippenham timidly, and at a short distance, he meanwhile, striding on, holding the umbrella ostentatiously over his head, and looking back over his shoulder to see if Lady Viola was following him. She came on slowly, notwithstanding the rain, hesitating, meanwhile, as to whether or not she should even then run away, and throw herself upon the mercy of strangers. But Viola was an earl's daughter, highly born, and delicately reared, and contact with the world—the strange outside world, of which she knew nothing, struck her as a very terrible thing. She followed Anthony then into a large waiting-room, and seated herself, after a moment's hesitation, on a long sofa, where a quiet-looking, elderly lady was already ensconced. Perhaps something in the mild face of this person may have suggested to Viola the idea of throwing herself upon her compassion, at anyrate she had not the slightest chance of putting that idea into execution. Chippenham came and stood closely by her side, and he began to talk in a strain of ~~an~~ ~~an~~ odiously familiar and detestably vulgar.

"So your people are not here, my lady, as I conjectured that they would be," said Anthony; "perhaps we shall have to start to the Land of Frogs without 'em at all."

"I had much rather not," said Lady Viola, in a low tone of anxiety.

"Ha, ha!" laughed Anthony, "that's pretty nearly always the way with us all. We had rather not do something or other which we are compelled to do." He pulled out his great vulgar watch in its copper case. "See here!" he said, "it's half-past six, and more, and the train starts at seven, half-an-hour from now." He shot his watch with a snap. "If they don't come soon, we must start without them."

"Are they to come into this room? Does Miss Danvers know the way?" asked Lady Viola, in a tone of deep, anxious fear.

"The way!—certainly not. Mr. Rokewood will come to see them off, but it strikes me he must have altered his mind, or—"

A wicked smile curled the man's lip as he spoke. "It's false," cried Viola, starting up, "it is a trick, he has conspired with you. I know it—I feel it," she went on vehemently. "He will purposely deceive Miss Danvers about the train, and then you will force me off somewhere else. Oh, madam," and she turned towards the mild old lady, who was looking with a face of wonder from one to the other of these ill-assorted companions. "I wish you would pity me, and afford me a safe asylum in your house until I can communicate with my friends."

"I am the daughter of the late Lord Monkhouse, who was murdered some two months since, while travelling in Normandy with his secretary. That cruel man will benefit enormously by the deaths of my twin sister and myself. He is trying to kill us by starvation, misery, every indignity that he can heap upon us. This person is one of his creatures, and I have been entrapped here, expecting to meet my sister, and travel with her and an elderly lady to Paris, where we were to be placed in safety at school; at least, there we should be treated as gentlewomen. We should have pleasant food, airy rooms, light, warmth, fresh air, and the companionship of refined persons. I was happy at the prospect. There we could have rested in peace until the return of our friends from their autumn tour; but I find it is all a trick. I am to be taken I know not where—perhaps murdered by that man. My sister is not coming, I feel convinced; pity me, dear madam, assist me. Call the stationmaster, call anybody, and I feel convinced that I shall be protected from this man. I wish to escape from him."

"Dear me!" said the mild, elderly lady, "what a thing to be sure. What can I do though, my dear young lady? It is such a thing to interfere!" And the meek lady trembled.

"You have no need to interfere," said Mr. Chippenham; "indeed it's better not to—the truth is, this young person is not right here," and he touched his forehead. "She always fancying herself earl's daughter and all sorts of goes, and her uncle, Mr. Rokewood, has determined to place her under the care of a medical gentleman, and I'm going to take her. Now young person," and the wretch nodded defiantly at the terrified Viola. "Now you know what you have to expect if you come any of these sudden dodges with me, trying to do a fellow out of his just gains."

The man's face was purple with rage and astonishment; he had never fancied that the timid young creature at his side would have dared to address a stranger in that courageous fashion.

"Dear me," said the mild lady, moving away from Lady Viola in evident terror, "what a dreadful thing—mad, and so young, such a mere school-girl, and so lovely, poor thing, poor thing; but of course it would not do for me to interfere."

"Alas! and is the world so selfish?" moaned Viola, looking after the figure of the elderly lady who had shuffled out of the room—cloaks, bags, baskets, and umbrellas were included with her hasty retreat. "And am I to be left a victim to this man, this terrible man. I shall die of fear, I feel I shall."

She started up from the sofa as she spoke, and made for the door, but the heavy hand of the vile Anthony was upon the slender arm.

"Gently, lady fair, not so fast. I tell you that I am to be well paid for this affair; one hundred pounds will find its way into the pocket of Anthony Chippenham, if you reach your new home in safety."

"My home will be the grave," said Viola, bitterly, "that is what you mean."

"Not a bit of it," cried Chippenham, with a laugh, "blesss you I wouldn't hurt a hair of your pretty chestnut curls for the world; but if you are quiet and gentle, and pleasant, why I can make it pleasant for you where you are going to—do you understand?"

Viola paused a moment, then she said:

"I wish to make no terms with you, sir, of that kind but this: I promise two hundred pounds in place of the one Rokewood would give you, so that you permit me to order a cab and return to the house of Miss Danvers."

"Softly, softly, lady fair, where are you to find the two hundred pounds? All easy enough four years hence, but Anthony Chippenham may be asleep under the dining-table by that time, and your ladyship also. If you had it now."

"I have twenty-five pounds of Miss Danvers'," cried Viola, imprudently, "which I am sure she would lend me if she knew all."

"Twenty-five?" cried Anthony. "Well, twenty-five is twenty-five. Give me the twenty-five, and I will engage to make you very happy in your new home. Jupiter! there's the bell. I have got the tickets, come along."

He dragged her by the arm out upon the platform, where the people were scrambling into the carriages. The train was a very long one; the engine was puffing out steam, and making that deafening noise which is so confusing to one at a time of perplexity. It never struck Lady Viola till afterwards how extremely odd it was that her old companion should have obtained the tickets so long beforehand, nor had she any idea where the train was going. Some time after, she understood what pains he had taken to hide the place of her destination from her.

Another moment, and he had lifted her up the steps into a first-class carriage. A gentleman was following.

"Thank you; I have paid for this compartment," said Chippenham, appearing at the window.

The gentleman went away; another moment, and the train moved on.

"Where are we going to?" asked Viola.

"Ah, my lady, that is my secret," replied Chippenham, "I am not to permit that to escape."

Viola was silent. Oh, the horror of that night journey, the rumbling of the train, the sharp sound of the railway whistle, the maddening speed—for they were travelling by express—the sick fear, the yearning, wild, and despairing, to find herself once more with her twin sister; the cold, deadly foreboding which crept over her whole spirit, and whispered to her breaking heart that they two would never, never meet again. How cold the world seemed, how pitiless, how selfish—even that old lady with the bags and basket had turned away, afraid to interfere.

"Cowardly world," moaned Viola, bitterly.

She sat near a window where she could look out in the night. The rain had ceased, and the moon was riding high in the heavens, all the country lay out in the mystery of shadow; and the train went on, on, on, dashing swiftly—the sparks from the engine flashed into the blackness of the night.

Chippenham seemed to be reading a *Times* by the light of the carriage lamp. All at once the train ran into the light and crush and bustle of a large station. Where are they? The men began to shout the name of the station; but, listen as she would, she could not catch the sound of the name of the place. She looked up eagerly for the painted letters, but with a shrill whistle the train was off again with clamour and noise, speeding on through the darkness.

Viola sank back amid the pillows in despair; she was too worn out by this time to weep. On, on, on again. At last, fatigue overcame the high-born young sufferer, and she slept. It might have been that Chippenham himself succumbed to the fatigue and the lateness of the hour—at anyrate, he did not in any way molest or annoy the Lady Viola during those few hours of repose; and Viola dreamed happy dreams, while she leaned back amid the soft, spring cushions. Again her arms were around Norah, again the gay banquet hall at Grand Court was decked for the Christmas feasting and merry games, as it

had been at the last great English festival, and Philip was there—Philip smiling and radiant with happiness. Her dream grew still brighter, there came a burst of music into the hall—music as from heaven, it was too sweet to be earthly; and there, standing among his guests, his tenantry, his neighbours, his friends, his children, was James, sixth Earl of Monkhouse. Viola flew towards him with a great cry. Ah, bitter, bitter waking!

The cold morning looked in, gray and melancholy, upon the unhappy Viola. The train was speeding on through a wild, cheerless moorland country. No trees, no house, no church spire in all the dreary expanse. No sunshine, as yet, to brighten the scene with its heavenly light—all dull, lead-coloured, cold mist, lying low on the bare hills at the horizon's verge. Whither was she speeding? Whither? But the demand found no response, only the mournful echo to the hopeless question—whither?

CHAPTER XVIII.

Oh, we grope our way so blindly,
Through the darksome shades of life,
And the best will err so often,
'Mid its tumult, toil and strife.

Judge Not.

PHILIP RUTHVEN left Strawberry Lodge on the morning of that eventful day which concluded so sorrowfully for the Lady Viola, with plenty of business on hand, independent of the task he had set himself of watching and guarding the interests of his beloved.

The reader will recollect that on the evening when he assumed the Indian disguise, and audaciously entered the mansion in Grosvenor Square, accompanied by Hammond Danvers, his costume was so loaded with precious jewels that neither the countess nor Rokewood doubted for one instant his identity with that Eastern prince, the eccentric Nakindall, whose madcap pranks were filling the columns of the daily papers.

Philip, at the time when he left Strawberry Lodge, seated in the carriage of Miss Danvers, held a strong box of black oak in his lap. This box was padlocked, and bound strongly with iron bands; it contained the great, glowing rubies, gleaming emeralds and large, dazzling diamonds, which had formed so important a portion of his fanciful and splendid disguise. By his side was a packet, containing the satin, gold-embroidered dress, which he had worn.

A court jeweller, Mr. Miles Russell, had lent some thousands of pounds worth of jewels to Hammond Danvers on the young gentleman's own security. His father, Sir Brook, was known to be a wealthy country baronet. When the Misses Danvers married, Mr. Russell always supplied the wedding ornaments. He was in fact the family jeweller of the Danvers' family, and, knowing Hammond so thoroughly, he had not scrupled to trust his gems into his keeping; but the risk and responsibility was great. Philip shared it with his friend, and he was anxious to get rid of the precious freight which he carried. When that was disposed of, Philip was expected to attend at the hospital at a certain hour, after that there were visits to be made in company with the surgeon under whom he studied.

"In the evening," said Miss Danvers, addressing Philip, "we shall be glad to see you at Strawberry Lodge sometimes, if Hammond gets better; but it's very painful for me to think that I can't even take the dear fellow home to nurse, not if I am expected to continue to take charge of these young girls."

And the punctilious old lady fidgetted, and then smoothed out the creases in her rich lavender satin dress.

"Why not, madam?" asked Philip, in unfeigned surprise.

"Why not?" asked the old lady, in a tone of anger, and the colour mounted into her face. "I invite young girls without a mother to visit at my house, and invite a young man to meet them? Most terrible suggestion. I am quite surprised at you, sir!"

Poor Philip coloured in his turn, and wished Miss Danvers were not such a prim, strict, old personage. He felt happy, and full of hope, meanwhile. Viola had assured him of her love, and he believed in the purity and sincerity of her faith. She was safe (so he thought, poor Philip!) safe now under the protection of this good, if eccentric, Miss Danvers, and he would be permitted to visit her, at least sometimes. True, difficulties lay out in the far distance—the pride and opposition of relatives would have to be surmounted; but on this bright September morning, Philip was inclined to take the good for granted, and shut his eyes to the evil. The carriage rolled over London stones, and in due time stopped before the imposing mansion of the Earl of Monkhouse, with its great escutcheon and heavy portico.

Philip always felt his heart sink a little at sight of this fine town house; there was, he could not help fancying, something scornful and supercilious in the

very look of the long rows of windows, with their velvet or satin hangings.

Miss Danvers' footman rang the bell, and returned with the message that Mr. Rokewood would be happy to see Miss Danvers. Mr. Hammond Danvers had passed a good night.

"Thank heaven for that!" cried the energetic old lady, jumping briskly out of the carriage, and nodding hastily to Philip:

"Good-bye for the present, Mr. Ruthven. I shall take Lady Norah away shortly, but I will see you, perhaps, to-morrow."

"The old heathen," muttered Mr. Philip Ruthven, who was a passionate and impatient young man, looking with something between a smile and a frown at the retreating form of Miss Danvers; "she is decidedly not a Christian, in my sense of the word, she is too rigid, and frigid, and precise; she is too starched with decorum, and overladen with family pride, so that she looks upon me in the light of an upper servant, I almost fancy." He looked up angrily at the rows of windows. "If it should happen that Mr. Rokewood does give up the guardianship of Viola and Norah to her, until the return of Colonel Claverhouse from Italy, I must guard my secret well, or she will try and 'preach down' Viola's heart—old and formal—fitted her puny part! Pshaw!"

The young man leaped out of the carriage, and walked away with his hat lowered over his eyes; he was still grasping the ebony box, and the packet of Indian costume was strapped to his small valise. He found his way first to the establishment of Mr. Miles Russell the jeweller, and counted over to him the sparkling stones, the heavy golden chains, all the borrowed treasures which that worthy personage believed had been used for a masquerade ball. Then Philip took back the Indian disguise to the person from whom he had borrowed it, and after that he walked towards the hospital.

As yet the sights and sounds of suffering in a hospital were new, and appalling to the young student of medicine. He thought not of them while he was passing through the streets on that September morning. No, Philip thought bitterly of his own trials.

He was proud, with a fierce pride which came he knew not whence; certainly his childhood spent among rough peasants, his boyhood and youth passed at strict, cold schools, had not been either of them pampered into egotism, or self-conceit; and yet while Philip walked through crowded London, with his hat over his eyes, careless of the foot passengers, who jolted against him at every step, his heart was torn by raging and contending emotions. Pride, suffering and furious, was torturing him like an evil spirit.

There had been a patronising condescension in the manner of Miss Danvers when she had hastily stepped out of the carriage and bidden him adieu, which had turned the joy which was dancing in his heart into anger and pain.

"She loo's on me, I verily believe, as a paid dependent of Hammond's," he muttered to himself in a sudden burst of mortified rage. "If sweet Viola should betray herself, what a life she will have! Her grand, near guardian, Colonel Claverhouse, will be told. Ah I wonder has she strength of character sufficient to contend with the violent and bitter opposition she will meet with. A penniless student of medicine, there can be no doubt that a stigma of shame attaches itself to my birth, else I should know the names of my parents, and whether they are living or dead. Ah! let me toil, and toil," continued Philip, grinding his white even teeth with the agony of the thought; "let me work until my back is bent, and my hair is gray—let me become a master in science, a king in the noble and honourable profession I have chosen, I can never wipe away that stain; I can never make Viola's proud relations regard me with aught but a pitying contempt; and should she marry me in spite of them, she will lose name and caste. Will her love stand the test?"

Poor Philip was in a gloomy mood; looking at the black side, he forgot the brighter, and ignored the gifts which a benevolent Providence had bestowed on him. Physical strength, great manly beauty, high powers of intellect, the love of a being pure, true, and beautiful, as Lady Viola, all this he looked resolutely away from; the demon of pride possessed him, and tormented him beyond bearing.

He entered the hospital; mounted, with his brow of gloom, into that room where he knew that the professor under whom he studied would be already preparing to make a tour of a certain wing of the establishment, accompanied by his pupils. Philip entered the room. The grave physician, a little gray man with spectacles, over which he had a strange habit of peering, when anything particularly interested him, looked up at Philip, and then looked at the great gold watch he held in his hand.

"Half-past eleven," he said, sententiously.

A group of young men stood round him. Philip fell in with their ranks, and followed Doctor Singleton through that apartment, and into a long ward, where beds were arranged on each side in rows, and men lay groaning in torture, or sleeping in convalescence, or staring at the ceiling in the torpor of exhaustion, as the case might be. One glance around at those clean, white beds, and those sick and suffering men drove out the evil spirit of pride from Philip's restless young soul.

"Ah!" said his better nature, speaking within him, "and if I never win what the world calls fame, if I never win wealth, if even (which heaven forbid) the love of Viola should wax cold, and I be left desolate and with my happiness blighted, still we must not only seek our own selfish happiness in this world, as good old Rector Somers taught us, as much by his life as by his sermons—bless his noble old heart. No, I will toil that I may better learn how to alleviate the sufferings of unfortunates like these."

Then he went and stood by the side of one bed, listened attentively to the doctor, and made notes in his pocket-book.

When the doctor ceased speaking, Philip raised his eyes from his note-book—his large, fine gray eyes so mournful, thoughtful, filled with intelligence luminous with the fire of love and noble ambition—and they encountered the dark, sad eyes of a woman, who, seated on a rush-bottomed rocking-chair, was slowly swaying herself backwards and forwards while she was employed in knitting a gray worsted stocking. The woman was only a hospital nurse, rather more than forty years old, wearing the white apron and simple print dress of her class; her dark hair, amid which a thread or so of silver gleamed, was neatly braided under a small becoming cap of white lace; only a hospital nurse, knitting by the side of a bed where a patient lay sleeping, and yet the sight of the woman stirred Philip as he had hardly ever been stirred before. What was there in those fathomless dark eyes, with their dreamy depths of slumbering passion and repressed tenderness? It was not that the woman's features were of a remarkable beauty, although even now, pale and sunk, and ghost of her former self, as she evidently was, they might have been coveted by a sculptor as models of Greek purity, and faultless cast—it was something more—something quite mysterious, and undefinable. Philip looked at her, and forgot the patient, and the doctor—everything but the sad-faced woman knitting—knitting patiently in the rocking-chair. And it seemed to him that her eyes followed him everywhere, like the eyes of a portrait. A strange ghostly feeling came over him—where had he met with that woman before? In another life?

He smiled at himself for the wild, superstitious fancy, and still he followed Doctor Singleton from sick bed to sick bed, but he heard little or nothing of the words, the wise words, which passed the lips of the learned man.

At last the wards had been gone through, and Philip was standing in an ante-room, looking for his hat among a crowd of others. All at once he felt a hand, gentle and thrilling, clasping his shoulder. Turning, he confronted the hospital nurse.

"Might I beg the favour of ten minutes' conversation with you, sir?" she said, faintly.

She coloured as she spoke, as though abashed at her own temerity in addressing a stranger; and the flush seemed to clothe her face in all the brightness and bnes of youth for a space.

"I shall be most happy," he said, politely.

"That woman has the voice and manner of the aristocracy," cried a student, when she had left the ante-room, followed by Philip. "What can she have to say to the new fellow? It's like love at first sight," and he passed out with a laugh.

Meanwhile, the nurse had led Philip into a small, private sitting-room. She first closed the door, and then, pointing to a chair, said:

"Pray be seated, sir."

He obeyed, wondering and in silence.

"Would you be good enough, sir, to tell me your name?" she began.

"Philip Ruthven."

She drew a long sigh.

"You resemble strongly a—a person with whom I—I was well acquainted in the days that are gone."

She paused. The hot blood surged to the fair cheek of Philip; a thought, nay, a conviction seized him—this woman, so beautiful and unfortunate—was she not, nay, she was his mother; but no flood of love or tenderness welled up in the breast of the student of medicine. No, he betook himself of his unhappy boyhood and desolate youth, of the sick longing for a parent's love, which made him wakeful and wetted his pillow nightly with his tears in childhood; and if this were his mother, and she had hidden herself from him to save her pride in those days,

why he had neither love nor respect for her now. So he reasoned hastily and hotly, after the fashion of his noble but impetuous nature.

"You say you know a person whom I resemble," he said, looking at the woman; "and pray, did you call me here to tell me that?"

In spite of himself, his voice took a bitter inflexion. It seemed that the woman shrank and cowered beneath that glance of fire shot out of the gray eyes.

She folded her arms meekly across her bosom and lowered her head, as if by that manner of placing herself she imposed a restraint upon any outward manifestation of feeling.

"If, sir, your family name be Ruthven," she said, "and if there be no secret connected with yourself that you wish to find out, then I am mistaken, and I humbly beg your pardon."

Ruthven drew a long, fierce sigh; he imagined that he saw down into the woman's heart, and read her thoughts like an open page. She had deserted him in his childhood—at least, she had only scantly provided for his wants, and then left him to the mercy of strangers—now, perhaps, struck by his resemblance to his father, whose name she was about to reveal to him, she intended to send in quest of that father, perhaps to extort money for her. Mean and mercenary motives were all that his angry soul would recognise in this person. The wrongs and sufferings of years seemed to rise up a grim army of ghosts out of their graves in the dead and gone time when he was a wee child.

"Madam," he said, scornfully, "I do not know my parents, and now I do not care to know them."

She made a step forward, a moan escaped her lips, she stretched out her arms, then they dropped to her sides, an expression of hopeless anguish came into her face. Philip watching her, saw with his prejudiced eyes only the hysterical nervousness of a vain and selfish woman who did not relish the honest contempt of a son who resented her neglect.

"Sir," she said, suddenly, and as if she would startle him out of his stern reserve, "your father is the Duke of Renfrew, at present, premier in the cabinet, and"—she hesitated—"he was lawfully married to your mother—the proofs are not wanting; you are heir to the dukedom."

The room spun round; table, book-shelves, chairs, pale woman in print dress and white lace cap. Was Ruthven mad, or dreaming—was the hospital nurse mad? He caught at a chair for support—the woman was close to him now, and clinging to his arm in an agony of tenderness.

"Sit down, sit down," she implored, "this has been too much for you. I will bring you some brandy; here, smell this bottle of salts."

Philip pushed away the small white hand impatiently.

"No, no, madam; your news startled me, but a moment's reflection proves its fallacy. The Duke of Renfrew has a wife living, and two daughters."

"Not a legal wife," said the woman, calmly, "he does not know it, but I could prove it any day."

"Your story is wild, wild, madam, to excess, altogether unlikely."

"It is true," responded the woman, quietly, and speaking coldly, almost haughtily, in her turn.

"Then, if so, what am I to do—moneyless, nameless, friendless?" asked Ruthven, bitterly.

"You must find the certificates, sir, and then send a copy of them to the duke, who is at present in the Highlands on a visit, and the parchments are hidden in an old house ten miles from Edinburgh; it all lies in your way."

Ruthven was dazzled, blinded rather, by the brilliant prospects which this strange woman held out to him.

"At any rate," thought he, "I will put her to the test. I will journey to Scotland, I will gain possession of the parchments, I will make sure that they are genuine, and then—"

"Well, madam," he said, haughtily, "I thank you for your information, and I will act upon it if you will be so kind as to give me directions."

She drew a letter from her pocket, and handed it to him.

"In that you will find directions, sir; meanwhile understand"—she laid her hand on her heart as she spoke—"that no benefit is sought for any human being, save yourself, in this matter."

Philip smiled bitterly, a smile of unbelief in the woman's words. She saw the smile, and it seemed that it wounded her like the stab of a dagger, for her lips whitened, and appeared to writhe in pain.

"Sir," she said, "perhaps some time you will do me justice."

"You?" he uttered the word in affected, cold surprise.

"Me," she answered, and a hot flush dyed her cheeks and temples, but Philip heeded it not; bowing hastily he rushed from the room and across the corridors, down staircases, and out into the street,

then he hurried into the nearest coffee-house, asked for a private room, opened the sealed envelope, and read the following words:

"The marriage certificate of John Conniston, Duke of Renfrew, and Jane Ingoldsby, daughter of Mark Ingoldsby, surgeon, is hidden under a white and red heartstone, in a room known as Prince Charles Stuart's room, so called from the fugitive prince having occupied it during his residence in Scotland. This room is on the second floor in Wylderstone House, within ten miles of Edinburgh, now occupied by James Stanton, Esq."

That was all that Philip could find on the first sheet, but on the second was written:

"The birth and baptism of a son, christened John Marquis of Aberdil, will be found in the same place."

"It looks like truth, and yet it looks like fiction," murmured Philip. "Anyhow, I will set the question at rest. I will not suffer this prospective dukedom to interfere with my medical studies, as it would inevitably do if it remained uncertain. Alas! a journey into Scotland will nearly beggar me. I must live on one meal a day for two months on my return."

And the poor fellow smiled bitterly to himself. Philip at first went back to his rooms, packed up a few necessities, and the same wet evening which saw poor Viola start from London Bridge Station under the odious escort of Mr. Chippenham, saw Philip set off from Euston Square, towards the north. All through the night, while his beloved was journeying in another direction, Philip was hurrying towards North Briton. About midnight, the train ran into a large station; it would rest there ten minutes, and Ruthven got out and purchased a cigar. He walked up and down the platform smoking it, thinking of Viola, of the hospital nurse, of the Duke of Renfrew, when he saw a face at the window of a first-class carriage, not his own train. It was the face of the Lady Norah Beaumont, white, tearful, imploring.

"I have called to you twice," she screamed, faintly. "Oh, save me, I—"

Another moment, cruel, cruel moment, and the train moved on. Philip made a wild clutch at the window of the carriage. A guard interposed.

"He'll be crushed," roared the crowd.

The young man made another desperate leap, he stood now upon the step, dashed the glass of the window in with his fist, and so clung on for dear life, and the train was flying at lightning speed through the darkness.

"Ha!" said a voice, and Rokeswood's grim face came to the window, his cruel hands grasped the arm of Philip, cruel murderous hands, he was struggling to thrust him down to death. "Am I to be pestered always," howled the secretary, "down with you, apothecary's boy, down with you. Another moment, and contact with the next train on the next line will knock you off," laughed the secretary, "don't you hear it humming in the distance? Your hours are numbered. No, you sha'n't enter here."

And the train on the next line was humming in the distance.

(To be continued.)

VACCINATION.—However true it may be, as Mr. Paget, the magistrate, said, that the "greatest and wisest men of all nations approve of and strongly recommend vaccination;" that "the highest in the land have their children vaccinated;" and, what is more to the purpose, perhaps, that compulsory vaccination is part of the law of England, it is clearly becoming more and more necessary that the public should be reassured as to the merits of the process. Explain it how we may, the fact is that for many years past a strong distrust of vaccination has been spreading, a distrust which in every case is believed to have good grounds in actual experience and observation. Inquire, not amongst "the highest in the land," perhaps, but amongst the poorer classes, and you will find almost every woman abounding in instances of healthy children destroyed by vaccination. It is not often alleged that the children die of the process; what you commonly hear is that "they were never the same afterwards"—were never well again. So general is this conviction, so fast is it spreading, it rests upon grounds of such painful experience (as they who hold it say), that we may confidently look for increased evasion and defiance of the law. Dread of a fine will not weigh much with men and women who believe the health of their little ones to be at stake; and we may even find parents going to prison, like the poor woman who was dealt with by Mr. Paget, rather than subject one child to a process which they believed killed another. Something must be done to reassure the public mind on this subject, or presently it will give us trouble. When the law conflicts with domestic instincts and affections the sooner the misunderstanding is cleared up the better.

A PATRIARCH.—A few days since Richard Wood George died at Green Street, Kent, at the age of 92½ years. He was the father of 10 sons and two daughters, nine of whom survive him, the eldest being 71 years of age. His grandchildren 49 alive, and his great grandchildren 96, of whom 23 are dead. He lived to see the fifth generation, and the number of his posterity alive is no fewer than 121, many of whom attended the funeral.

THE PROPOSED VISITS of the Duke of Edinburgh seem to excite some anxiety at almost every place where he is expected. The Indian authorities are perplexed how to carry out the Queen's desire that the prince shall not receive or give presents during his visit; and the Emperor of China, it is said, has intimated that he cannot receive the prince "on a footing of equality." Probably the Imperial Chamberlains will find a way out of the difficulty.

A SMALL FARMER named Black, residing near Loughborough, is in custody, charged with cruelty to a lunatic. In his house was found a poor demented creature, 74 years of age, with his feet manacled and his hands fastened at the wrists by handcuffs securely chained to the wall of a small room. It was elicited that the wretched man's name was Richard Bagley Wild, and that he had been under Black's care for thirty years, and previously in the custody of another person for a like period, during which time he had been kept chained up in the way described.

THE FRENCH CABLE LAID.—The French Atlantic Cable has been successfully laid, making in all three cables which have been stretched between the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The Great Eastern has proved herself especially useful in the laying of long cables, and should she now be laid up for ever her history will always be connected with that of the most remarkable enterprises ever undertaken and completed. The efficiency of submarine cables, and their immunity from interruption through the effect of atmospheric electricity, suggests the expediency of connecting all large sea ports by cables instead of land lines.

THE THAMES TUNNEL has just been closed as a foot-way, and now a new tunnel has advanced far under the Thames, called the Thames Subway. About sixty years ago the great engineer, Richard Trevithick, was engaged upon what he called the "Thames Archway," at Rotherhithe. He carried it successfully to within a hundred feet of the opposite shore. This was from 1807 to 1809. The present engineer has found, as Trevithick did, a continuous bed of clay under the river. The present tunnel is, consequently, the third attempt. Dodd's tunnel was in the chalk down the river, and was stopped by springs entering through the fissures.

THE CONSUMPTION OF AUSTRALIAN PRESERVED MEATS.—The greatest satisfaction has been expressed at Melbourne at the success of the Australian preserved meats. The London agents had not only sold all their stock and that which was afloat, but had booked orders to the extent of 213,000 tins, or 1,093, 250 lb.; and they had, moreover, closed their books, fearing to commit the Melbourne company further. They report that they can with ease dispose of 100, 000 lb. tins per week, and this would absorb 25,000 sheep a week, and is ten times the amount the company is at present able to produce. Besides, meat has been dearer of late at Melbourne, but this was not expected to continue long.

LONDON BRIDGE.—We are promised an "extensive" restoration of London Bridge. The carriage way (which is full of holes) is to be repaired, the lamp-arc to be painted, and nearly 4,000 (l.) are to be spent. Everybody who has had occasion to go into the city from Surrey would hail any real improvement of the old nuisance, London Bridge; but what is promised is a mockery. The fact is (and the sooner it is recognised the better) London Bridge is just about half the width which the public convenience requires. It requires as many policemen as a London parish, and the pushing, crowding, dirt, dust, and general annoyance that its passengers are subject to will never be cured until a new bridge is built.

A CENTENARIAN IN A BALLOON.—On the 3rd inst. Mrs. Hogg, an inmate of St. George's Workhouse, Chelsea, attained the age of 100 years. On being previously asked how she would like to celebrate that event, she replied, "Send me up in the great balloon, that I may admire the world I have lived 100 years upon." Her wish was transmitted to Mr. Godard, who kindly made every arrangement conducive to her comfort. The weather on the 3rd was unpropitious, but the ascent was made on Thursday, the 5th, the day being calm. The full extent of the rope, 2,000 feet, was reached, at which altitude the old lady was provided with wine and biscuits, and presented with a medal to commemorate the event. She was accompanied by the medical officers of the parish, the matron, and a party of ladies.



[THERESA AND GOTTHART.]

THE DOWAGER'S SECRET.

CHAPTER I.

He is an evening reveller who makes his life an infancy and sings his ill; At intervals, some bird from out the brakes Starts into voice a moment, then is still. There seems a floating whisper on the hill, But that is fancy, for the starlight dews All silently their tears of love instil, Weeping themselves away till they infuse Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

Byron.

"Oh, see how low the sunbeams are slanting, Gotthart! Where think you our dear Herr Wohler can be tarrying? His dinner has lost all its goodness, and if he does not hasten he will spoil the supper also."

The clear, rich voice breaking upon the stillness, made the boy, who sat close to the window, bending over a light table on which were spread pencils and paper and a tray of artist's colours, lift his head with a nervous start.

"What did you say, Tessa? Is it so late?"

The first speaker laughed, good-naturedly, although there was a little indignation in it, and a chime of silver bells could scarcely have rung out a sweeter, clearer chorus.

"Oh, Gotthart, you foolish little dreamer, when you get at your painting and drawing you forget everything else, and are like the boy when he donned his fairy cap of invisibility. I verily believe you know nothing of my getting up, and turning the dishes, and renewing the coals, nor anything about my dismal lamentations that good Herr Wohler should lose such a rare treat as our dinner to-day. To think I was so jubilant over that splendid game which Konrad had such good fortune to obtain."

The boy laid down his brush, put two long thin bands against the table, and by that movement wheeled away his chair, which was on rollers, and turned towards his companion with a smile which illuminated his pale, sickly countenance into positive beauty.

"I am very sorry, Tessa, but I hope he will be here in time for our little festival to-night, which is only a feeble attempt to honour his birthday. Konrad was to bring him a fine new cane, and thou, I know, hast every stitch set in the gay dressing-gown, and see, I have been adding a new wreath in the corner of the portfolio. It seemed to me I might put in a little more—ah, do the best we can, we shall not half pay him—the dear, good, noble heart!"

"Thou sayest right. Gotthart; we never can

and we never shall. And he is already paid, because he is so happy in our love, and so cheered by all his own goodness of heart."

And Theresa Schuyler came over to Gotthart's chair, and kneeling down lightly, she rested her head against his arm, and clasped her dainty little hands across his knee, and the pair made so sweet and charming a picture, that it seemed indeed a pity that some of the famous artists who had made the cathedral beyond so grand and beautiful could not have chanced upon the sight, and given it to the canvass for the applause of all Munich.

For Tessa was a maiden of only seventeen summers, and in spite of her simple home and its humble surroundings, there was a nameless, patrician grace in every feature—in the poise of the stately little head, in the fire of the large dark eye, in the very shape of those symmetrical hands, which the noblest lady in the land might envy.

The pale, spiritual face of the lame youth, with its large blue eyes, hardly clear from their dreamy haze, its long silken hair curling off from the blue-veined temples, still ashine with its childhood's gold, the thin lips drooping into a wistful curve, made a touching contrast to the girl's blooming, brilliant beauty.

"Oh, yes, Gotthart, when we gather around him to-night, with our little gifts, and our earnest, eager greetings, he will be happy, the dear, generous soul! he will think it is he who is the one to be grateful—he so soon forgets his own good deeds. Ah, I can see exactly how he will look when I sing my little ode.

His dear old eyes will be all blurred over, and he will be ashamed to show it, and you will see how silily the old silk handkerchief will be brought out to dust his coat, and how it will make little, quick dashes, now and then across his eyes. The dear, noble Herr Wohler! I wonder, if I had a father of my own, let him be ever so grand a gentleman, could I love or honour him more than I do this poor music teacher? Tell me, Gotthart, do you think I could?"

Gotthart passed his thin fingers caressingly over the satin-smooth bands of hairs.

"How can I answer you, bright one? Is it not the same with me? Herr Wohler took thee, a poor, little, abused creature, from a wicked task-mistress, who declared you had neither kith nor kin in all the wide world; he brought thee to his home to be its sunbeam and rainbow. And his generous heart, finding itself so richly repaid by your love, warmed again, and melted in compassion when he found Konrad, carrying me in his arms, walking to our father's grave, and kneeling there, because there was no other home open to us. Konrad has so often told me what he said, as he took him by the hand. 'Come,

dear children,' said this noble man, 'the house that is so blest by one, has room yet for more.' And we came. And how nobly he has dealt with us, sharing his slender pittance with us, caring for us, blessing us. Oh, Tessa, I am ready to sink with shame when I think how little recompense he gets! Dost thou not know it is the richest hope, the dearest joy of my efforts at the brush there, to be able soon to earn my share of the narrow income? for he is growing old. Dear, dear Herr Wohler! does it not seem hard that such a man's strength should ever fail? And he must not work so hard; he must not be allowed to spend his hard earnings on little luxuries to make us happy. We three have grown now out of childhood, and it is our turn to care for him."

"I know it is. I have my own dreams, too, though they may be wild and visionary. If it were not that it gives me a hope of future usefulness, as well as earns him many a happy hour of recreation, would I allow him to keep the piano there, and spend so much time in teaching me? Ah, we all love him, we are none of us ungrateful! There is some comfort in that thought. And Konrad is a great help now. Konrad, when he sings my song to-night, will delight the dear old *maestro* beyond all the rest. Shall I sing it again?"

And rising, the girl flung back her graceful head, opened the scarlet lips, and poured forth a silvery melody, the words a congratulatory ode upon the birthday of their benefactor and friend.

Gotthart's pale face glowed with enthusiasm.

"Thy voice is diamond clear, and silver-tongued, and honey-sweet, Tessa. I think the good Herr Wohler has his plans for thee. Thou lovest music as I love my pictures, and as Konrad loves his queer stones and crayons. He has instilled into us all something of his own earnestness. Sometimes, Tessa, I have pictured thee standing before a noble and admiring crowd, thy beauty set off as it deserves, such as the grand signoras are, whom the master has described so many times."

Tessa coloured scarlet, and ran over to the piano, the sole costly article in the simply furnished rooms, and sent her fingers rippling across the keys.

"The grand signoras have no better teacher than I possess. Herr Wohler has done his best with me," she murmured.

"It is late indeed; there is the whole shadow of the cathedral tower, and hark! I am sure it is Konrad's step. He said he would get away early from his work, to-night, to help us decorate the room. He will be surprised that our dear Father Franz has not yet taken his dinner."

Tessa ran to the door to meet the tall, manly-look-

ing youth, whose grave, deep eyes and broad, full forehead, hinted of latent power and genius.

"Konrad, Father Franz has not been home to dinner. We have had no word at all from him. We are almost thinking it is time to be frightened."

"Oh, no," he answered promptly, "the dear man was well, and unusually brisk this morning. I met him by chance just after dinner on the promenade, and it gave me quite a start, for I was just marching out of the carver's shop with the cane in my hand; I trust he took no heed of it, and indeed I think not, for he seemed all in a glow of excitement. He bade me tell thee that what promised to be a grand stroke of luck would keep him away from dinner, but that he would surely come to supper, though he might make it a little late; all the more lucky for us, for there's a deal to be done before he gets here. Help me out with all these things; my pockets are full, and my basket, and my hands."

"Oh, then we must be swift. Thou dear, good fellow. How did you find money to buy all these? See, Gotthart, wreaths, candles, and oranges, and all things beautiful. Oh, thou delightful Konrad!"

The young man smiled joyously at her glee, and watched with fondness and pride the dancing lights flitting across her eyes.

"Here is the cane, Gotthart, dear," he found time to say however, and turned to his brother's chair. "Look at the carving, and say if it does justice to the design. I had it marked as your gift, you know, as was right. And oh, Tessa, there is a wreath for you to wear, and a necklace when you make your *début as prima donna*, and sing the congratulatory ode."

"And what for yourself, Konrad? You are too much like Herr Wohler, like our dear Father Franz, you spend all for others. You need a new coat to wear at our birthday *fest*. It is a shame for such a form as yours to be disgraced by that old seedy thing."

"Nonsense, Tessa! If thou canst find no better employment than railing at my poor coat, I shall put you out from the room. Here take hold, and let me lift this wreath to its place over his picture. I shall brush up the coat, and it will come out as good as new. If I had had anything left, I should have got a white dress for you; it would have been so charming with the wreath, when you sing the ode. But as I hadn't, we must make the best of it as of the coat; for we must have the cakes and the bottle of wine to drink his health—heaven bless him—and the oranges and the candles, to look as pleasant as possible. Dear heart, if only it was forty, instead of sixty, this birthday."

And Tessa, understanding the tender grief, stretched out her white hands to his, and both drew nearer Gotthart's chair, and for a moment the three yearning, youthful eyes met in a sorrowful foreboding glance.

"Oh, what would become of us all if Father Franz was taken away?" sobbed tender-hearted Tessa.

"It would be a black, woeful day," answered Gotthart, who had the calmest face of the three; "but I should follow him soon, and Konrad would be your protector, Tessa."

"Well, but what foolish creatures we are!" said Konrad, after he had given a gentle pressure to Tessa's clinging fingers. "He is not taken away yet, and we are going to celebrate his birthday, and, if we do not mind, he will be here, and nothing ready."

And Tessa recovered her gay spirits, and went flying around, giving her deft, light touches, and setting everything into that refinement and sweet neatness which does not come of elegant furniture, but can be brought out in the arrangement of the simplest and poorest.

Konrad had the evergreen garlands all up. The candles were in the shining brass stands, the beloved portrait hung in a conspicuous place, with its wreath of fresh flowers carefully drooping to hide the tarnished gilding of the frame. The little round table was wheeled into the centre of the room, draped with a snowy cloth, the basket of oranges and the flask of wine set in the centre, and all the other unwanted delicacies ranged around with due regard to effect; and then Tessa, her eyes shining like stars, danced across the room and dropped the curtains, shutting out on one side the narrow sidewall and high wall and passing crowd, and on the other the charming bit of landscape of which they were so proud—a glimpse of the "pizzi" verdure and its flashing fountain, and above, the tall symmetry of the cathedral's twin towers, and the clear sky where now the first stars were twinkling through the shadowy gray.

"Now we are ready; oh, I hope he will come soon. Gotthart, you are to commence your speech promptly, and mind you don't break down, for if you do, I shall follow suit, and fall to crying, and that will spoil everything."

"Come here, and let me put on your wreath and

the necklace. How I wish, Theresa, they were every one genuine pearls instead of wax beads."

"They are quite as pretty, I am sure, Konrad."

"Oh, hark! there is a carriage stopping, isn't there? My heart is fluttering like a bird. Hush—hush, that's Father Franz, he's coming. Oh, Gott hart, let me wheel you forward; we must make the *tableau*."

Theresa said all this in swift whispers, in a tremor of delight and excitement.

She flung herself down on one knee before Gott hart's chair, covering his shrunken limbs from view of the doorway with her spreading skirt, and crossing her white arms across his knee. The fine manly Konrad stepped behind her, and his towering head, with its crisp brown hair, rose above the other two charming faces, and it was a *tableau* indeed for the pair of astonished eyes which quick footsteps brought to the threshold.

"Bless my eyes! dear souls!" ejaculated a nervous voice from the doorway; but able to advance no farther, because of Gotthart, beginning at once his congratulatory speech of welcome. When that was over husky tones essayed to clear off the tremor, but went not beyond the first hem for Theresa parted her rosy lips, and flooded all the listener's hearts with her silvery enchanting hymn.

When the pure, sweet echoes died out, the girl sprang up with a glad laugh, and rushing forward, flung herself into the arms of the tall, spare, seductive *maestro*, who stood there, looking on upon the pretty *maestro*, with misty eyes, and lips too tremulous to keep to their bland smile.

"Father Franz, Father Franz, did you think we were going to forget your birthday?" she cried.

The old music teacher held her close with one arm, while he shook warmly with the other the outstretched hands of the youthful brothers.

"My children, my good children," he faltered, and then made good Tessa's prophecy, and the coat sleeve was dusted vigorously.

For a moment he turned back to the threshold, where a dapper little woman stood looking on with amusement but not unapproachable eyes.

"Enter, mademoiselle; these dear children have got up a little surprise, ah, and a banquet. You will be heartily welcome to join us."

"I will not stay long to hinder the festivity.. I

will only look to see that my measures are taken if this is the young lady. Ah, I shall have the inspiration now to make something very charming indeed for the *fräulein*."

And while Theresa stood motionless with surprise, the dapper little woman whisked out a tape measure, and tablet and pencil, and turned her about, and lifted her arms, and spanned waist and wrist, jotting down numbers as she did so, and then she made a demure little courtesy.

"The young lady shall look more sweetly than the grandest duchess there," she said; "and now, Herr Wohler, I will go."

"Stay—stop at least to drink to my birthday in a glass of wine," said the old *maestro*, advancing to the table, and seizing upon the flask.

Konrad hastened to set the glasses ready, and then the company, all but Gotthart, drank to Herr Wohler's health, standing up by the table and smiling joyfully.

The brisk little woman set down her glass, and said:

"And now I must be gone, for the carriage is waiting. Don't fear, Herr Wohler; everything shall be perfect, and I shall come myself and dress her."

And with another smiling nod she vanished.

"Father Franz, what does the woman mean?" cried out Tessa, recovering her voice with the woman's departure, and quite forgetting that the gifts were yet to be presented.

The good old man took both little fluttering hands into his.

"My darling, thou wilt have an opportunity at last to do justice to the poor old *maestro*, to vindicate his dearest honour—his good name as an instructor. Wilt thou, for his sake, be brave and firm?"

"Will I not?" cried out Theresa Schuyler, her great dark eyes shining like stars.

"My child, the Baroness Grefenstein receives her highness the Princess Mathilde, on a visit this week. She had arranged to give her illustrious visitor a selection of favourite music to-morrow evening, and she is in despair because the signora from Vienna has a cold, and cannot sing a single note. I heard the director bewailing the absence of all the fine singers from town, and I asked to see the selections which were to be played and sung. Little one, they are just what I have taught you. I told him I could find him someone competent and sure to please. You shall practise with my watchful help all day to-morrow; say that you will not let fright or timidity ruin my hopes."

She might well be touched by the eager appeal of his voice.

"I will not, indeed I will not, Father Franz," she answered, firmly.

The old *maestro* gave a tremulous sigh.

"Then," said he, "are all our fortunes made, and this pretty *fest* you have arranged is but a faint prophecy of what we shall yet see. Rejoice, my children, that the cloud is lifting away from us. Only sing, my silver-voiced birdling, as you did to-night, and all Munich, and presently all Europe, will be at your feet."

"Oh, Father Franz, Father Franz, if it be true I shall be the happiest girl in all Germany. You shall live in peace and luxury, and shall have only one pupil, your silly little Tessa. Gotthart shall have the beautiful master-pieces for which he yearns so, and the best teachers, and shall live among pictures all his life; and Konrad—ah, he shall have plenty of money to set about his grand schemes at once! Oh, how beautiful! how beautiful!"

"What is the grand scheme? that is something I have not heard about," returned Herr Wohler, smiling fondly into the beaming countenance.

"Gotthart knows, and so do I. You see one day when Konrad and I came home from the cathedral and told about the new painting there—how it seemed to glorify the very place, how it lifted us up out of our poverty, and seemed to make us rich with joy—Gotthart wept because he who loved pictures so ardently must remain tied to his chair, and could never share such pleasure. Then Konrad went out to try to find a copy of the picture, and the best was so poor and mean that he tore it up, and wept himself, saying that it was cruel that those who most needed the inspiration of beauty and art were shut out by poverty from enjoying the best works. And then he fell into a brown study, and when we asked what ailed him, he said he was thinking what a noble and worthy thing it would be to produce copies of these beautiful pictures in the same colours, at such a price that the common people could make them homes lovely with the counterparts of the master-pieces. And he said if he had money he would try what could be done. And that is Konrad's grand scheme. And if I am to make your fortunes, that shall be his."

Konrad's deep blue eyes turned upon her with a yearning tenderness, but the *maestro* noticed that a shade hung upon his forehead.

"Dost thou not see, Konrad," he asked, "that she will succeed to-morrow night in that noble assembly, and afterwards find herself famous?"

"I see," answered Konrad, with a little shiver and a frown that no sooner came than it was gone.

"What ails thee, lad," persisted Herr Wohler, drawing him on one side, while Tessa began attending to the table. "Art thou not glad of this wondrous piece of luck?"

"I ought to be. I cannot tell why I am not, except that a black cloud seems to drop upon me every time I think of it, as if it meant that she would soar out of our reach and life."

The old *maestro* turned back, and seized the astonished Tessa almost fiercely.

"Theresa Schuyler," said he, "the woman came to measure you; she will bring you garments befitting the grand and noble company into which you will go to-morrow night. You will win their applause; I know it, I feel your pathway will henceforth be amidst gay and gilded scenes. Noblemen will flatter, celebrities will admire, even royalty may applaud you. Speak, tell me, will it win your heart away from the three who have loved and cared for you in your obscurity and poverty?"

"How cruel you to suggest such a thing," cried Tessa, with eyes blazing indignantly; "oh Father Franz, if it were not your birthright I would be angry."

He turned away with a glad smile.

"Come here, you foolish Konrad, you almost infected me with your nightmare gloom. Now away with every cloud. We are to be merry, as merry as children. Gotthart, you must drink the first health; little Tessa, sit you down, and give me a plate. The duchess gave me a silver one to-day, but it did not bring half the zest which comes now. I am a very bear, and I scent game! the feast is waiting; come, my children; this is a happy night indeed!"

CHAPTER II.

Her playful smile, her buoyance wild,
Bespeak the gentle, mischievous child;
But in her forehead's broad expanse
Her chastened tones, her thoughtful glance,
Is mingled with the child's light glee,

—Anon.

It was a day of excitement and delicious tremors now of joyful anticipations, and again of timid foreboding, for sweet Tessa Schuyler, that which followed the old *maestro's* birthright. Her agitation indeed was shared by all of the singular little family. The old music-master of all, perhaps, suffered the

most. It was not alone that the success of his adopted daughter, the prosperity of all the dear ones whom this warm-hearted, wifeless, childless man had taken into his generous affections, seemed at stake, but it somehow appeared to him that his own life was going up to a tribunal to be stamped with the brand of failure or to be crowned with success. More thrilling still, as his dear ward herself must prosper or languish according to the *dénouement*.

He kept himself firm and steady while he stood at the piano with the programme, and followed with a jealous and sensitive ear every note of the young *debutante's* practice. But when it was ended, and he could but acknowledge to himself that there was no loophole for criticism, he turned away sick and faint with the unusual excitement. He caught Konrad by the hand when he saw the young man enter the house at dinner time, and drawing him aside, he said in broken accents :

"Konrad, I am not equal to it. I shall ruin everything and destroy her composure by my nervousness. You must be her escort, and I will get a place on the balcony outside the music-room, where I can listen, but not betray my trepidation."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Konrad; "I have no apparel suitable for those grand scenes, even if I could bring myself to the task."

"I have thought of it. You can take my order from the duchess, and go to the tailors. They told me there would be no difficulty in fitting out a suit at half-an-hour's notice. You are young, firm and calm. I am getting fagged out, I believe, for I am sure I shall behave like a child, whether it is success or failure. You must go with Tessa, Konrad."

"If I must, sir, that is the end of it, and I will do my best; but I confess to you, my heart shrinks, as from a keen misfortune."

"Nonsense! She will succeed. Her path will be triumphantly upward. Have you no confidence in my judgment?" he said, testily.

"I have not the slightest doubt. No one can listen unmoved to her angelic voice. She will be flattered, courted, famous," returned Konrad, gravely.

"Then you should rejoice," returned the old *maestro*, hastily. "I know what lies heavy on your mind, my lad, but that is the unkindest thing of all. You are doubting Tessa's honour, goodness, and virtue, Konrad, when you fear that prosperity will tear her away from her friends."

Konrad sighed softly.

"I will not doubt any longer, sir, and if you are resolute in requiring my attendance, I had better go at once to find myself respectable habiliments for such a scene."

And Konrad went out again into the street. Upon his return, he found the brisk little woman, with a formidable array of boxes and parcels, in full possession of the little sitting-room. Theresa was in her room, and presently the dressmaker ran in after her, and from within they caught sundry little shrieks of gleeful delight and childish pleasure. And after a little, there sailed out to them a vision that seemed to their fond, admiring eyes, the perfection of loveliness and grace.

Beauty unadorned may be very charming, but it is certain that the most beautiful find heightened fascination by the tasteful assistance of dress and ornament. The brisk little woman had certainly done wonders, and had not lost sight of the fitness of things. A gossamer fabric of snowy whiteness fell in silvery waves over a white silk underskirt. It was made in elegant simplicity, no furbelows, only at the sleeves a broad bow of deep crimson looped away the fleecy curtain from the fairer white of the rounded arms, and at the breast a crimson rose, with a knot of green leaves, was lightly fastened, stirring and fluttering like a pendulum, to mark the tremulous unrest of the agitated heart beneath.

Another rose shone forth its crimson glow from the glossy hair, which was gathered together with a string of pearls, and left to flow in a shining wealth of curls over the uncovered neck.

A little murmur of delight from the three waiting there in the sitting-room greeted the fair appearance.

How her cheeks glowed! What dazzling lustre shone in the eyes!

Herr Wohler caught up her drooping hand, and kissed it as reverently as he would have kissed the queen's.

But Tessa, with a little cry of gratitude and joy, flung herself into his arms.

"Father Franz, Father Franz, I shall love you to the last day of my life!" she sobbed.

But Herr Wohler was not unmindful of the dressing-maid's horror and consternation. He gently disengaged the clinging arms.

"But the beautiful dress, my darling?"

"Ah, it is beautiful, isn't it? And I shall not shame you, shall I, Father Franz?"

And then she turned in girlish vanity to be admired by the younger men.

Gotthart was in an ecstasy of unalloyed delight. "Oh, the glorious days that are coming! When I have learned to paint as well as you can sing, Tessa, I will reproduce this scene. And we will keep it to show you, when you are old and wrinkled, what a beauty you was on the night of your *début*."

Theresa turned her gay face towards Konrad, but the young man had not a word to say, his heart was too full, and his voice failed him, but his eyes spoke eloquently both his admiration and his tenderness.

She gave a little shout presently.

"Oh, look at Konrad! Now he looks like a lord. Dear Konrad, that is charming!"

"I am to escort you, Tessa. Father Franz will not venture into the grand company."

The dressmaker, alarmed at the careless crushing of the delicate skirt, drew her away to be cloaked, and then came the carriage which the duchess had sent.

An hour afterwards, with her heart beating almost to suffocation, Tessa found herself at the door of a noble apartment filled with elegantly-dressed people. The dazzling lights, the rich furniture, the flashing jewels blindfolded her eyes, and she caught hold of Konrad's arm and whispered :

"Oh, take me home—I dare not! I dare not, Konrad!"

The young man was deadly pale, but he smiled upon her in quiet calmness, as he returned, firmly :

"Shall I tell poor Father Franz what ignominy you have heaped upon his name?"

It was all she needed. She flung back that stately head, smiled proudly and went forward, receiving her introduction to the noble company with quiet composure. And then Konrad led her to the piano, and was about to station himself beside her, when a gentleman with a jewelled order glittering on his breast, stepped forward, waved him aside with a delicate patrician hand, and announced that he should only be too much honoured to be allowed to turn the music for so dazzling a creature.

Konrad fell back into a curtained window, and stood there watching the scene with grave, sad eyes, that seemed to see some black shadow brooding near. He watched the faces of all present, as the first clear notes fell on the stillness, like the silver chime of fairy bells. He saw the undisguised delight of the duchess, the open admiration of the princess, the astonishment and fluttering looks of all, most especially of the handsome man who stood beside her, and turned the leaves of her music with such a deferential air.

Konrad watched the gentleman narrowly. He noted carefully the symmetry of his person, the glitter of the diamond order, the haughty air, as of one used to authority, but most of all he was impressed and disturbed by that eager, admiring gaze which scarcely left for a single moment the brilliant beauty of Tessa's face.

A black gloom settled over the young man in spite of his best efforts. He could have ground his teeth in rage, although he knew what delight this triumph would give his *tonsfactor*, when the elegant gentleman by the piano led off the applause, when Tessa's first song was ended, by clapping together enthusiastically his white-gloved hands.

Theresa bore herself with wonderful self-possession. Konrad perceived, and could almost have wept at the conviction, that the high-spirited, beautiful girl was only in her natural element. All her shyness and trepidation had vanished. Her cheeks were scarlet, her eyes glittering, and when the gentleman bent down, and whispered some flattering sentence in her ears, she smiled back archly. She was enjoying herself thoroughly. He hated himself that this fact was so bitter to him, and tried to forget his gloom in picturing the triumphant bliss which he knew was filling the old *maestro's* heart, out on the balcony there in the chill and darkness.

He caught Tessa's eye, when on the arm of the elegant gentleman. Konrad heard the name at last, as Count Scheffer.

She was escorted around the aristocratic circle with a personal introduction to each of its noble members. She flashed to him one dazzling, triumphant glance, and then bent her head in response to some remark of the count's.

The latter led her to the refreshment-room, and when she returned, the rose which had fallen from her hair was conspicuously knotted at his button hole, its drooping petals half concealing the glitter of the diamond order.

The duchess perceiving the young man's grave face, presently came to the windowed recess, and in her great satisfaction at the success of her *protégé*, condescended to talk with him familiarly.

"Your sister cannot remain any longer in seclusion," she said, smilingly. "Such a star must ascend higher and higher. I prophecy that she will set all Europe crazy. It is so rare to find united

such genius and loveliness of person and exquisite grace. Count Scheffer, who is almost music mad, insists that she will take the crown away from our most famous *artiste*. He is extremely anxious to bring Herr Mauder from Munich to see and hear her. You will give my best thanks and congratulations to Herr Wohler with this."

She thrust a folded paper containing a bank-note for a large sum into his hand, smiled again, and added :

"I assure you the days of obscurity and poverty are all ended for this charming songstress."

Konrad could only bow his thanks. He knew that he ought to rejoice. He tried to think that he did rejoice at this auspicious *début* of his beautiful friend, but all the while his heart lay like a stone in his breast.

There came a glow of pleasure when the signal for the breaking up of the party was given. He hurried towards Tessa to give her his arm to the dressing-room, but the Count Scheffer had no idea of relinquishing his fair companion. Konrad looked out, therefore, into the balcony, and hurried through the French window, when he saw the familiar figure of the old music-master.

"My lad, my lad," said the latter, in broken accents, stretching out his hand to grasp Konrad's, "now is my old heart thrilling with joy. Now, at last, I shall be rewarded for my plodding life and oft deferring hopes. She will prove to the world that the poor old *maestro* was not so wrong in his system, so useless in his life. Oh, the precious darling! How I long to fold her to my heart and thank her for her bravery. But not here, not here. I should have to vent this excitement in happy tears, and they must not think me a driveller quite yet. Konrad, Konrad, we will have another *réve* to-night, and we will not spare the expense."

"Ah," said Konrad, all his black gloom fading away before his warm sympathy with the old *maestro's* joy, "the duchess gave me this for you."

"We will have a feast, such a feast! Konrad, I will run around to order in a grand supper and plenty of bouquets, and a few of the neighbours, maybe. We must not be selfish in our prosperity. And you may keep the carriage a little, can't you? to give me time, and when she comes home, she shall find it illuminated and brightened, and Gotthart shall have a present of some sort for her. Only give me a half-hour's start and I can do it. Why can't you have her ride around by the great square?"

His voice was shaky, and his hands trembled with boyish eagerness and delight in the little plot.

"Oh, yes, I can manage it; but she won't be ready yet for half-an-hour," returned Konrad.

"And I'll hurry away. Ah, how beautiful we will make everything."

And Herr Wohler hurried off down the balcony steps around to the front entrance, and rushed into the street.

(To be continued.)

THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

CHAPTER XIX.

And in the darkness of the night, she stole away, as one who dreads the action of the law.

Anon.

HER ladyship, acute as were her perceptions generally, had underrated the intelligence of the man Rush, who though apparently absorbed in conversation with the footman, kept his eye fixed upon each lady who left the hall of Hampton House.

He distinctly saw the Lady Beatrice walk a little way along the pavement and get into the dingy and obscure cab, which had such a strange and bizarre appearance amongst the gorgeous equipages with which the road was almost blocked up, making it a task of considerable difficulty for the hack carriage to extricate itself from the entanglement. During the delay which was inevitable before it could get clear, Lady Beatrice Hampton fretted and chafed at the frequent stoppages, fearing lest some untimely chance might enable her enemies to distinguish her features and so track her to her destination.

To prevent such, for her, unfortunate occurrence, she sedulously drew her hood down almost over her eyes, and wrapping her shawl over her shoulders, lay as far back in the cab as was possible, thankful for every shadow, and trembling at the sight of a gas lamp, which by its sickly glare might betray her.

She had not, truly, exaggerated in the least degree when she told her children she was an actress on the world's stage. She had a most difficult part to perform, and it often wrung her tender and susceptible heart to have to wear a mask which was detestable to her.

We have said that Rush, with his hawk-like eyes, had perceived her ladyship as she left the house.

He might have stopped the cab at once, and, overwhelming her with confusion, have compelled her to return to the house, for any recognition of her by a creature of Lord Adlowe's would have rendered her proposed journey useless and abortive. Knowing this, he waited for a brief space, keeping his eye firmly upon the cab, which was vainly trying to make its way through the crowd.

The scene was a noisy one. Confusion worse confounded reigned everywhere. The dancing was over and everyone who had been invited to Hampton House was anxious to get away as soon as possible. Footmen and link-boys shouted out the noble names in stentorian voices. Coachmen made frantic efforts to force their horses through the throng. Oaths, shouts, curses blended inharmoniously together. In a word, the scene was one which could only be seen at the close of a London fashionable party.

While Rush was biding his time and waiting to follow the cab when it had got far enough away to lull any suspicion that her ladyship might entertain that she was being followed, Lord Adlowe ran down the steps in visible agitation, looking right and left for the detective, who he felt sure would be posted somewhere in the neighbourhood. Discovering him at last, the centre of a group of liveried servants, he walked towards him, and, touching him on the shoulder, exclaimed angrily:

"Why are you idling here? She has left the house, and you do not seem to be aware of it."

"I know it, my lord," answered the man, calmly.

"If so, why are you here? Did I not tell you to follow her wherever she went? Is that not what I am paying you for at this moment, and what I intend to reward you handsomely for doing?"

"Certainly, my lord. You shall have nothing to complain of. I like to do things in my own way, that's all. Now I am off; the time has come. You shall hear from me in the morning."

With a familiar nod, Rush started off at a run, going a few yards along the pavement, and then diving under and darting among the ranks of carriages with a dexterity and agility which was really wonderful for his skill and success.

Lord Adlowe looked after him with astonishment not unmixed with admiration. The confidence with which the man spoke pleased him; he had fancied that Rush had allowed the Lady Beatrice to escape from Hampton House unnoticed, and he was equally surprised to find that the contrary was the case.

With his own eyes, Adlowe had seen her descend the grand staircase, but he thought she intended going to the supper-room. She, however, passed through the hall, and out of the door. He would have followed her, but a block on the stairs just at that moment, kept him where he was, fuming like a caged tiger at the delay.

Rush quickly overtook the cab, and holding on behind, ran after it, secure from injury by passing vehicles. Its course now became easier and more direct, as the throng of carriages was passed, and a clear road lay before the driver. With a spring, and a little subsequent clambering, Rush contrived to mount the top of the cab, and by that means reached the elbow of the driver which he leaned over and touched.

"Hullo!" cried the driver, looking up, "who's there, and what are you a-doing on the top of my cab?"

"Hush!" answered the detective, "not so loud."

"Who are you?" persisted the driver, raising his whip threateningly.

"Police," replied Rush, with a significant motion of the hand. "Lady insides' got some diamonds she ought not to have. She's not a desperate criminal nor yet a professional thief, and I'm sent to get the jewels back without any exposure in the public papers, d'ye see?"

"Well, not exactly," said the cabman. "Come and take a seat on the box and say some of it over again. I'm rather slow at taking things just at first, you know. Sit here will you, for I can't turn my head to talk to you and mind my horse too."

"That's quite right, and I'm obliged to you for the offer," said Rush, making a few more quick and dexterous movements worthy of an acrobat, which seated him on the box considerably more at his ease than he hitherto had been.

"Now then," continued the cabman, "let's hear about these diamonds. I'm glad she's not a despit criminal, becos I'm rather afraid of the dangerous classes."

"She's a lady of title," exclaimed Rush. "But she's got an unfortunate hankering after other people's jewellery. She was seen to take some from a lady at the ball at Hampton House; but, to save the scandal, no one liked to tell her of it, and I'm

sent to get them from her when she arrives at home. Her friends will hand them over, and she won't miss them in the morning, poor thing."

"Lord," said the cabman, reflectively, "what strange things takes place amongst the upper classes. I shouldn't have believed it. Now, if a poor woman had done that she'd have been——"

"Tried at the Old Bailey," suggested the detective.

"Exactly. Well, it's a good thing to be rich," continued the philosophical driver.

Rush imagined that Lady Beatrice Hampton would not remark the presence of a second person on the box, and having made his peace with the cabman, sat there very contentedly, with that satisfaction beaming from his face which one always feels at having accomplished a difficult undertaking.

He was sure in his own sagacious mind that he had entrapped his prey, and that he should with average circumspection be able to follow her whither she was going, and by that means gain valuable information, which would permit his employer, Lord Adlowe to unravel her secret. In this belief he was mistaken.

Lady Beatrice did remark the presence of a second person, and was considerably alarmed at the circumstance.

The cab had not stopped to take anyone up, and she was perfectly certain that the box-seat was unoccupied at the time of starting, for she had been particular to notice that the driver had no one with him.

She suspected that the stranger must be some enemy.

Without any hesitation she let down the side window nearest to the detective, and he, hearing the noise, in a careless movement turned round.

That was quite enough for Lady Beatrice.

The scanty light was just sufficient to enable her to recognise the man she had seen loitering about Hampton House, and whom she had fancied so much engrossed in his conversation with the footman that he had not seen her enter her cab and drive away.

Masking her emotion with her accustomed fortitude, she pretended not to be in the slightest degree agitated, and said, in a voice which was calm and collected:

"Are you sure that the cabman is taking the right road? I do not recognise these streets."

"Quite right, my lady. Don't be alarmed," answered Rush.

Here he made a second mistake, for he addressed her by her title, when he was supposed by her to have no knowledge of the person he was talking to.

Thanking him in the same firm voice, Lady Beatrice fell back in the cab, almost fainting.

"He knows me," she murmured, "and has the impudence to let me suppose so. How thankful ought I to be that I have made this discovery here, instead of at the dearly-loved home I call my home. He shall not outwit me," she added, as her courage came back to her. "My cunning shall equal his, detective though he be. Lord Adlowe suspects much, but he knows nothing, and he shall never have the triumph he so ardently longs for."

Rush was entirely deceived by the calmness of Lady Beatrice Hampton's manner. He was persuaded that she thought him a mere friend of the cabman, who, it being late at night, was getting a lift towards his dwelling.

For a few minutes her ladyship were wrapt in profound meditation.

The cab was already in the main road, and in a short time it would reach the station. What should she do? To go home that night she had determined. She alone could comfort her husband in his distress, for he doated upon the gentle Giraldi, who was the darling of his heart, and whom, next to her much enduring mother, he loved more than anything on earth.

But how to accomplish her object?

The miserable spy upon the box, as she called him in bitterness of spirit, would follow her at the station, and she could not hope to get away by the three o'clock train as she had intended.

One course only suggested itself to her.

That was to escape from the cab in which she was as it were a prisoner, and fly in an opposite direction to that in which it was going.

Then having money with her, she could hire another public carriage with a fast horse and drive down to her destination. It would make a slight difference in the time of her arrival, but an hour or less did not matter so long as her safety was insured.

With impatience displayed upon her countenance, she waited for an opportunity to put her scheme into execution. Luckily she had not to wait long.

At that hour of the night the only vehicles moving about were a few cabs and private carriages taking

people home from balls and parties, and those heavy lumbering waggons which take the produce of suburban gardens to Covent Garden Market.

The wheels of two of these had got locked together, and they had got across the road, making it impossible for the moment to pass them.

The cab stopped, and Lady Beatrice, opening the door, noiselessly glided out, shutting it after her with the same cleverness.

She retreated into the shadow of the houses; at the same time the wagon, cleared one another. The road was open again, and the cabman whipping up his horse, drove on without remarking the trick which had been played upon him.

Nor had the detective been more on the alert.

Her ladyship thought she was now free to pursue her way without molestation. Her knowledge of London was very limited, and she wandered along for some distance without knowing in what direction she was going.

The rich evening dress which she wore was calculated to attract notice, as was her handsome unvoiced face; over her shoulder she had thrown a shawl which enveloped her closely.

Some young men, singing and shouting, passed by, and seeing her alone, made some observations which she did not hear, for she fled away like a hunted deer and was soon out of their reach.

She had fully expected that she should be able to find a cab, but her expectation was not realised. A few came by, but they were either full or returning home, and shook their heads negatively as she hailed them. As she walked on she grew more and more perplexed, and wished that she was at home at her father's, for the policemen looked suspiciously at her, and she knew that she was compromising her reputation by being seen in the streets of London at that late hour.

When she ran away from the roistering young men, who seemed inclined to insult her, she had turned up Bond Street, and she had not proceeded far before she leaned against a lamp-post, tired, weary, and forced to confess that she was lost.

Here she remained for nearly ten minutes, impatiently waiting for a cab to come by. She would have given the driver a guinea a mile in her emergency.

A police constable who had been eying her with suspicion for some time, said, in a gruff tone:

"Move on there, if you please!"

Frightened and nervous, Lady Beatrice walked on a few paces and stopped again. Perhaps she thought this man might help her.

"I want a cab," she said.

"I know nothing about what you want," replied the constable, in the same rough tone, "we don't want women like you hanging about the west end end. So move on, or I shall have to make you."

Lady Beatrice was inclined to utter some impetuous reply, but prudence restrained her, though her face glowed with a burning flush, and she trembled with rage created by the man's insolence.

As she prepared to walk on, not knowing whether she was going or what would become of her, a gentleman in evening dress approached, and seeing that she was in some distress or difficulty, exclaimed:

"In what way can I assist you?"

The tones were familiar to her, and so, when she looked up, was the face.

"Lord Adlowe!" she exclaimed, involuntarily.

"My dear Lady Beatrice," he answered, equally astonished. "How, in the name of goodness, did you reach here? I thought you were at home. Dear me, how very strange that I, in going to my hotel, should meet you in this extraordinary manner!"

"It may seem very odd," said Lady Beatrice Hampton, regaining her composure; "but I can explain it to you."

"Oh! thank you."

"I was induced by a dear friend to accompany her a part of the way to her home. She put me down in a square not far from my own house, and I have been silly enough to lose myself."

"May I have the pleasure of seeing you home? It is too late for you to be out. I esteem myself especially fortunate in being able to render you this slight service."

"It is I who am fortunate, my lord," replied Beatrice, taking his arm.

The policeman had sheered off when he saw a gentleman speak to the lady whom he had just been insulting, and he felt relieved when he saw them walk away together.

Lady Beatrice did not endeavour to make Lord Adlowe believe the story, because she knew he would hear from his detective that it was untrue. She contented herself with thanking him in a coldly civil manner for his escort.

When they had gone some little distance an empty cab came by, and stopping before them, the driver offered his services.

"Just the very thing I have been in search of," said the Lady Beatrice Hampton. "I will not trouble you any more, my lord. I can ride home in this cab."

"As you please. It is, however, a pleasure, and not a trouble to—"

"You are too good," interrupted the Lady Beatrice, who entered the vehicle, the door of which the cabman held open.

"Hampton House, Hampton Street," said his lordship, lifting his hat as the cab drove off.

When Lady Beatrice reached the paternal mansion she did not scruple to go in at the front door. Her adventure could be no secret after meeting with Lord Adlowe, and soon she was in her private apartments, much to the surprise of Mrs. Fleck, who had gone to sleep in an arm-chair, not expecting her mistress back till morning.

"What, my lady, is it you?" she said.

"Yes, Fleck," answered Lady Beatrice. "It has been an unlucky night, but not so bad as it might have been. Listen, and I will tell you what has happened."

CHAPTER XX.

Is she a capulet?
O dear account! my life is my foe's debt
Shakespeare.

Such was our fallen father's fate,
Yet better than mine own.
He shared his exile with his mate—
I'm banished forth alone.

Waller.

THE more Mrs. Plumpton was thrown in contact with Giralda Arevalo, the more she was amazed at the wonderful likeness she observed to Geoffrey Trevalyan.

He had strangely enchain'd the sympathies and affections of the old housekeeper; and she was never tired of talking about him to any one who would listen to her.

Until the arrival of Giralda she had not had a very sympathetic audience, because Geoffrey had no friends at the Hall. Everyone, except Mrs. Plumpton, was his determined enemy. To them he was dead, why should they strive to clear his memory at the risk of offending the bright particular star, the guiding spirit, the heir at law—Lord Adlowe?

In spite of herself Giralda often stood before the picture that Mrs. Plumpton had shown her, and gazing steadfastly upon it, thought that such a face could not conceal a heart so bad as to be capable of injuring a benefactor from whom he had received so many proofs of affection and disinterested generosity.

One day Mrs. Plumpton surprised her while she was thus engaged.

"Oh! my dear, she said, with a deep sigh; "it does my poor old heart good to see you take such an interest in Master Geoffrey."

"I feel myself attracted towards this portrait, and know not why," answered Giralda.

"Many's the time," continued the garrulous old housekeeper, "that I've come up all alone to this room, feeling nervous, lest anyone should see me, for I am sure my lord would dismiss any of his servants, no matter how long they had been with him, if he thought they took Master Geoffrey's part against him. Well, my dear, I've looked at this picture just the same as you may be doing now, till the tears had rolled down my cheeks.

"The gentleman has a powerful advocate in you, Mrs. Plumpton," observed Giralda.

"If I could do him any good I'd cheerfully agree to have my right hand chopped off," answered Mrs. Plumpton, with energy. "I am sure he was innocent, and if he is living it is a shame he should be kept out of his own as he will be, by Lord Adlowe. It's a pity the days of miracles have gone by, but, then, I ought not to talk, for it is a miracle his being alive at all."

"Providence works in a mysterious way and the innocent are not allowed to always lie under a ban."

"You are wonderfully like that portrait," exclaimed Mrs. Plumpton after a pause, during which time she was carefully weighing the girl's words.

"So you have said before," returned Giralda, rather annoyed at the pertinacity with which the housekeeper returned to the charge.

Going to a drawer Mrs. Plumpton opened it and took out some articles of men's attire. These had belonged to Geoffrey Trevalyan; with them was a straw hat he had been in the habit of wearing about the grounds. Spreading them out she said "I wish I could persuade you Miss Arevalo to put on these things. They were young master's and I could fancy I saw him again. The hat will hide your hair and you can think you are masquerading."

"I should not like to do such a thing," replied Giralda, uneasily.

"Just to oblige me, miss. It's an old woman's whim and can't do any harm to anyone," urged Mrs. Plumpton.

Giralda hesitated.

Then with her habitual good nature she cast off her own clothes and donned the, to her, eccentric costume which Mrs. Plumpton had unearthed from the drawer in which they had for years been buried. The metamorphosis was complete.

Instead of a blushing girl in her teens, Mrs. Plumpton's whose vivid memory carried her back to the part, saw before her a handsome youth, such an one indeed as she had known Geoffrey Trevalyan before the unfortunate occurrence which drove him away from his friends and his home, to lay his bones, as some said, in a foreign land.

"If my lord could only see you now!" she said, in raptures. "His conscience would smite him, and I'm sure he'd fancy his pot boy was back again at the hall."

Having so far humoured the housekeeper's fancy, Giralda began to wonder how she looked in the garments of the unfortunate Geoffrey Trevalyan.

There was a large pier glass in the room, but it was so situated that little light fell upon it, unless the door of the room was open, which admitted the light from a window in the passage.

Giralda opened the door, and entered the passage in order to draw up the blind which was down. Scarcely had she succeeded in doing so when a heavy footfall was audible behind her.

She turned round rapidly. To her consternation she was confronted by Lord Trevalyan.

What could have brought him to that part of the house, which he seldom visited? She was at a loss to imagine.

While hesitating how to act, and fearful that she would incur the resentment of the choleric old lord for the silly trick, which he would be sure to say she had purposely played him, she assumed a statuesque attitude.

Her eyes seemed to penetrate to the very soul of the old nobleman, who, fancying that he saw a spirit from the other world, uttered a shrill cry, and throwing up his arms, fell with a groan to the floor.

Mrs. Plumpton rushed out immediately on hearing the fall.

"Heaven save us!" she cried. "What is the matter?"

"Lord Trevalyan has fallen down in a fit, I fear. Oh! Mrs. Plumpton, what have you made me do? I am the innocent cause of this misfortune."

"He must have fancied he saw a ghost, and his conscience pricked him, as I said it would if he was to see you," replied Mrs. Plumpton, who did not seem so much alarmed as Giralda expected she would be.

"Please do something," cried Giralda. "He may die if some assistance is not rendered him."

"Leave him to me," replied the housekeeper "and do you, dear, go instantly and take off those things. If my lord guesses the truth, his anger will be terrible. Both you and I shall lose our situations."

"Must we not avow the truth?"

"Not for the world. Let him think he saw a spirit; perhaps it will do him good, and soften his hard heart. But waste no time; he may come to and see you."

Giralda did not wait to be warned again of the danger attendant upon delay. She hurried into her apartment and shut the door, while she divested herself of the property of Geoffrey Trevalyan with as much speed as she possibly could.

She trembled violently, and prayed inwardly that the shock which his lordship had experienced might not be attended with disastrous results.

In the meantime Mrs. Plumpton placed something under the old man's head, chafed his hands, and applied some strong salts to his nose.

He opened his eyes, and gazed, or rather glanced wildly about him.

"Where is he—Geoffrey. I thought I saw—," he exclaimed, but the words died away on his lips, and he lapsed once more into insensibility.

"Deary me, how bad he is to be sure," said Mrs. Plumpton. "I am afraid this will turn out something serious."

While she was in a state of perplexity as to what she ought to do for the best, the door of the bedroom opened and Giralda stepped out.

"Have you put the things away?" asked the housekeeper.

Giralda nodded.

"And locked the drawer?"

"Here is the key."

She handed it to her, and Mrs. Plumpton put it in her pocket, where it lay secure with sundry other treasures.

"Do, like a good girl, run and call my lord's valet and some of the upper servants," exclaimed the housekeeper; "we must have him put to bed, and I think the doctor had best be sent for."

"Oh! what have we done, Mrs. Plumpton?" cried Giralda, wringing her hands.

"Nothing much, I hope, Miss."

"I shall never forgive myself for my foolish, thoughtless behaviour. What punishment do I not deserve?"

"If you will get assistance, Miss," said Mrs.

Plumpton, "you will do more good than you possibly can by lamenting what has unhappily taken place."

Giralda saw the force of this reasoning, and hurried away to summon the servants.

They were quickly in attendance, and it was soon currently reported all over the house that his lordship had had a fit.

He was put to bed, and a doctor sent for, who, alarmed at his prolonged insensibility, thought it advisable to take some blood from him.

This remedy had the desired effect. Lord Trevalyan came to his senses, and, in reply to questions which were put to him by his medical attendant, he gave a vague account of the occurrence.

He was walking along the east corridor, he said, when he became suddenly giddy, and at last his senses left him. He knew no more. A rush of blood to the head he supposed. He was growing old, and he must expect these things.

Mrs. Plumpton knew that his pride would not allow him to admit that he had been frightened out of his senses by a supposed apparition. That he kept a profound secret.

Giralda was indefatigable in her attentions to the old nobleman, who would lay for hours charmed, as it were, by her dulcet tones, as she read to him out of some favourite book.

She blamed herself for his illness, and contributed as much as in her lay to his recovery, which was slow.

Lord Trevalyan's valet, who was in the pay of Lord Adlowe, wrote to London, acquainting the latter with the strange, sudden, and unaccountable illness.

His lordship promptly dispatched Negwyn down to the hall to make inquiries, instructing him to telegraph immediately if the illness was sufficiently serious to require his attendance by the bed-side of his relative.

"I don't want to be dragged down there for nothing," he added. "You know I hate the place, and the old man too. But if he is dying or anything of that sort, then send for me at once, because I must be on the spot to see that no alteration is made in the will."

Negwyn soon satisfied himself, on his arrival, that there was nothing critical in the condition of Lord Trevalyan.

He even questioned the doctor in attendance upon him—remarkably shrewd, clever and sensible man who said :

"He is suffering from some shock to the nerves, of that I am certain, but he is so reticent that I cannot understand its nature. There is nothing to be alarmed at, for he will be about again in a week."

The valet was satisfied with this reply, and thought of going back to London.

He determined, however, while he was in the country and at the hall, to endeavour to extract some information from Miss Arevalo respecting her antecedents and parentage.

Watching her movements closely, he found that she was in the habit of walking in the park about noon.

One day he placed himself purposely in her way. She had seen him about the house on several occasions, and returned his respectful salutations in a careless way.

He was not, however, to be shaken off in this manner, for stopping, hat in hand, in front of her, he said, with a deferential bow :

"I hope you will excuse my freedom, Miss, but I should like to say a few words to you."

"Certainly," she replied. "But first let me know who you are. I have seen you I think at the hall."

"I am Lord Adlowe's valet, Miss. Lord Adlowe is the nephew of my Lord Trevalyan."

"Oh, yes. Now I understand. What is it you have to say to me?"

"Lord Adlowe himself, Miss, wished me to speak to you, for your own good," said Negwyn. "You have come down here and assumed a position, but nobody knows who and what you are, and evil disposed persons will talk."

"About me?" said Giralda, calmly.

"Yes Miss."

"What do they say?" she demanded.

"I heard one of the servants at the hall, say that your father was a convict, Miss, and that you did not like to say who you were in consequence. Now I am sure this is a calumny, and if you will confide your secret to me, Miss, I will take care that the truth is spoken, and if any one dare to say a word against you, after that, I shall know how to treat him."

"Will you give me the name of this servant who has maligned me," said Giralda.

"That would not be fair, Miss," answered Negwyn, with a look of low cunning.

"You refuse. Then I shall hold myself justified in supposing that you are the author of the scandal, infamous that it is, and consider you responsible. Do you hear?"

"I beg your pardon, Miss, but —"

"Not another word. I promise you that you shall be punished for your insolence, as I shall immediately complain to Lord Trevalyan."

The dignity and imperious manner of Giralda completely silenced the audacity of the valet.

He did not dare to exculpate himself, and looked anxiously after Giralda's retreating form as she went in the direction of the hall.

That afternoon he returned to town not having succeeded as he had expected, in extracting any information respecting herself or her family from Miss Arevalo.

She was as good as her word, for she complained to Lord Trevalyan of the insolence of Lord Adlowe's servant, the consequence of which was that his lordship received a severe letter from his uncle in which he was told that if his scoundrel of a valet dared to enter his house again he should be torbly ejected.

"What does this mean?" asked Lord Adlowe showing him the letter.

"I made a mistake, my lord," answered Negwyn; "all clever men are liable to do so at times."

"If you must do such a thing, keep my name out of the transaction I beg," rejoined Lord Adlowe; "or I shall have to look after another valet."

This threat completed Negwyn's discomfiture and he vowed vengeance against Giralda.

The friendless girl was, however, her best protector. She never did wrong and feared nobody.

Lord Trevalyan recovered and no one alluded to his illness. He was gloomy at times, but Geoffrey's name never passed his lips.

(To be continued.)

KATHERINE MOORE'S LOVERS.

"GOOD-NIGHT, Miss Katharine."

The tall, stately girl addressed turned slowly towards the speaker, bowing a farewell as she did so. "Why, do you go?" sprang to her lips, but she did not give it voice. Her eyes fell beneath his parting glance, and there was a tremulous motion of her delicate upper lip, which in his haste he did not see. She went to the window, watching him as he walked rapidly away.

"Ah! that explains it," she whispered, as she noticed for the first time a black horse which was being fastened to the limb of a tree just across the road. She knew well to whom that horse belonged, as did her friend who had just left her so abruptly.

While Mr. Harold Seymour, the new comer, shook out his scarlet carriage wrappings and arranged them, Katharine Moore stooped her cheek, which burned crimson with the movement, upon a bunch of blue violets standing in a slender crystal vase upon the window-sill. Then drawing back till she was hidden by the curtain, she watched Mr. Seymour while he fondled his black mare, who arched her fine neck and neighed by way of response.

Then he came up the walk with the assured step of a man who has all his life been accustomed to success. She even heard him, through the open window, singing softly to himself, while he waited for the door to be opened.

Harold Seymour had a wonderful voice, and was well aware of the advantage it gave him. He had won more than one woman with it, as he intended to win Miss Moore. However, he was wise enough to wait and let time help him, as it does many a man.

Why did he wish to win Miss Moore? Mostly because she had, for more than a year now, resisted his influence in a cool, calm way that almost maddened him—all the harder to bear because it was using his own weapons against him. Gradually he had become so interested in the work he had undertaken simply for amusement, that he had fully determined to marry her. He was wealthy, judged by the standard of the community where he had been born and bred. Miss Moore would make an excellent match, so people said, if she became Mrs. Harold Seymour. "Better than she deserved," some of the beauties added; a girl without fortune, and quite plain withal."

Was she plain? Mr. Seymour was not of that opinion as he bent low over her white, slender hand. He had come for her to ride, but with perceptions as quick as those of a woman, he knew that to ask her then would bring a prompt refusal. Something had disturbed the relations between them.

He had seen John Bradshaw leave the house a few minutes ago. John Bradshaw!—a civil engineer—a man of thirty-five with his position yet to win.

"What had he been doing all these years?" sneered Seymour.

It was no time for fruitless questioning; somehow he had lost ground with Miss Moore; to establish the ordinary state of things was his first care. She had taken a seat by the window, and was watching the young leaves trembling in the sunset light. She

had scarcely looked at him after the first greetings were over.

"I have brought something with me which I wish to read to you, Miss Kate—with your permission," he added, in that deferential tone he so well knew how to use.

She bowed slightly.

Without another word of preface he commenced reading. For half-an-hour she listened while that rare voice interpreted the bewildering beauty of the half-sensual poetry he had selected to serve his purpose. He stopped.

"Too dark to read, Kate; I'll finish it here; and going to the piano, he fulfilled his promise—his music was a continuation of the poem.

As the notes died away, slowly throbbing into silence, he saw that she had changed her attitude. She was listening intently, when suddenly the weird strains of music filled the room. Kate leaned back in her chair, with parted lips, through which the breath came quickly. She turned towards him at length. The room had been slowly darkening. Rising, he crossed over to where she still sat by the window, and standing behind the great arm-chair in which she sat, dropped the faintest possible touch of his fingers upon the heavy waves of her hair.

"The roads are sweet with orchard bloom, Kate; my horse is waiting. You will ride with me, I know. I saw your mantle here somewhere when I came in."

He passed between her and the window, intending to wrap it around her. Something fell as he lifted the cloak. She heard the fragments grind under his heel.

"My poor violet glass," she murmured beneath her breath.

He interpreted the inaudible words as granting his request.

"Your ladyship will have to rise," he said, gaily, holding up the wrapping as he spoke.

"I have determined not to ride," she answered, curving; and stooping, she felt for the violets.

She found them, though a fragment of the crystal pierced her finger as she groped for the flowers. She felt the blood flowing, but wrapping a handkerchief about her hand, she quietly waited his next remark.

Had there been more light, perhaps he could not so well have concealed his anger and chagrin. He went back to the piano, and proved his perfect control of voice and nerve by playing a low melody.

"Good-night, Kate," he whispered, as he again bent over her chair.

"Good-night, Mr. Scymour."

Her voice sounded unnatural, he remembered, as he passed out—a slight satisfaction, but all he could get.

She heard the regular hoof-beats of his horse as he rode away. The slow gait soon became almost a run, as the sensitive animal felt her master's mood.

"I only hope she may be left in that room alone for an hour," he muttered, unconsciously tightening the reins as he spoke. The horse dashed forward, thundering over the long bridge. For a moment Seymour's face, white with passion, was revealed by the light of the lamp which stood at the entrance of the covered bridge.

John Bradshaw, standing in the shelter of the trees on the river bank, saw, with quick perception of its meaning, the long leaps of the excited animal, and the face of the man whose passion urged him on. He had stood there for more than an hour, listening to the rushing of the black water below, and wondering, with a sickening pain at the thought, how Mr. Harold Seymour sped with his wooing. The wind blew in his face sweet, pungent odours from the flowering shrubs which lined the steep bank.

"But for those four years lost," he muttered, "I should not to-day be at the beginning of the race. But were they lost?" he added, slowly, forgetting in the rush of heron memories the patient toll of the years since, which had scarcely sufficed to place him where he had stood when he felt himself called to a nobler work than planning bridges.

He had loved Kate Moore even before that, with all the persistent force of his nature. Curiously enough, just then he remembered how, wearied out with a day's play in the June meadows, she had fallen asleep in a heap of hay where she had hidden herself, and he had carried her home in his arms without waking her. She was a little child then, and he was just twenty-one. Fourteen years ago—it did not seem so long. John Bradshaw was a proud, self-contained man by nature, but that hungry heart of his seemed to-night to be bursting all bounds. He stretched out his arms in the darkness with a half-smothered sob.

"But I seem to her old and grave, perhaps," he went on. "I have not the grace and fascination of these men who have never had to grapple with difficulties. Mine has been a hand-to-hand struggle, and I bear its traces. Yet I could endure thirty years more of it—with her love warm at my heart."

He added, tremulously.

Half a mile of hilly road lay between him and Kate Moore. He hastened over it, revolving in his

mind as he strode along the meaning of what he had seen. The room was lighted when he approached, but the curtains had not been let down. Obeying a sudden impulse, he looked in before entering. Miss Moore still sat alone, but her face was in shadow.

"I cannot look at her," he said, hastily, as he passed through the open doors directly into her presence.

She thought it was Seymour, evidently. With a quick start of surprise she recognised John Bradshaw's face, in the agitated one of the man before her. Whatever words of welcome she had, remained unspoken. She only rose and stood before him.

"Miss Katharine," he said, hurriedly, "I came back to ask you a question—knowing well enough that it is a useless one, but yet impelled to ask by a power I can no longer resist. I have hoped all these struggling years that I might have something worthy to bring you when my time came. My hope has proved vain. All I can give you is my great love."

He was silent a full minute before his next sentence came.

"Do you think you can love me?"

He paused, his dark fixed upon her face, his strong features quivering.

"Speak quickly, Katharine; it is life or death to me, but I will try to bear it like a man."

She moved a step nearer, but she did not speak. He turned away, leaning his arm upon the back of a tall old chair which stood near—he bowed his head upon it, and waited. Presently he felt a touch upon his shoulder—a slight fluttering touch.

"I think, John, I have loved you all my life."

"My darling!" he whispered, gathering the woman to that broad breast where as a child she had lain.

Later, he saw her wounded hand. She hid it from him shyly. How she had changed in the last hour! Was it the stately Katharine Moore, her lover questioned, who sat there with the blushes coming and going in her cheek, her blue eyes downcast?

"You have not told me about your hand."

"Twas done in rescuing your violets, John; the glass was broken."

He raised the white hand reverently and kissed it for answer.

Two or three golden days for the man who had had so few bright days in his life; wanderings through the May woods and the meadows by the river side; talks of that future, sweet yet solemn, which stretched unknown before them; intervals of silence, broken by wild gushes of music as the birds, startled by their approach, whirled out of their meadow coverts.

Sometimes the troubled look clouded Bradshaw's dark eyes, and he would ask, with pathetic earnestness, "Are you quite satisfied, Kate?" Once—he remembered it afterwards pitifully—she laid her folded hands upon his arm, and answered, raising her fearless eyes to his, "I trust you, John, above all the world." Then they parted—he to his office work, she to hold for a few months longer the place she had so long filled in her uncle's household. In October John was coming for his bride.

Mr. Harold Seymour might have muttered an oath to himself when he heard of Miss Moore's engagement, but he said aloud to his informant, with a peculiar smile:

"Pardon me, if I don't believe that piece of news—it's simply incredible."

The truth was that he did credit it, but he determined—and he had a dogged persistency of will—that if it lay in his power to prevent it, the marriage should never take place. He had by no means given up Katharine Moore; now he would put forth his strength. He was standing by a roadside brook, as he took this resolution, waiting for his horse to drink.

"For Mr. John Bradshaw, he'll find there's many a slip —"

He did not finish the sentence, but contented himself with cutting off the heads of some tall flowering plants with a well-aimed stroke of his whip. Had it been John Bradshaw's cheek that had received the blow, the movement or the look of Seymour, could not have been more savage.

So as the summer days went on, John Bradshaw, straining every nerve for the success that seemed to be just within his grasp, writing little notes almost daily out of the fulness of his heart to the woman he loved, little suspecting that she, too, was involved in a warfare quite as serious as his. Her instincts were strong and true; she loved her promised husband, but his rival was subtle and unscrupulous.

He never asked her to ride now-a-days, well knowing that attentions so public would be promptly refused by Miss Moore. But she could not well decline seeing him, when in the summer evenings he quietly dropped into a place in the household. He had known her uncle and aunt from his boyhood—he had been a favourite with both.

No doubt Mr. Humphrey would have been better pleased if his niece had chosen Seymour. Mrs. Humphrey, however, judged by her woman

instincts, and was less affected than her husband by the community estimate of the merits of the two men. She preferred Bradshaw. Mr. Humphrey might have exercised some authority with a child of his, but the last had married years ago, and he felt all the indulgence and something of the tenderness of a grandfather towards his orphan niece. Whatever he might have done with his own daughters, he never could force her inclinations. So Mr. Harold Seymour stole in very often with the evening shadows. Almost always he rendered a reason for coming; sometimes it was a new book—very tempting that; to Miss Moore—oftener it was a new piece of music which he was ready to sing for her.

Ah! that voice—its pathos, the depths it revealed, which made her shudder while she strove to stay her trembling feet upon the safe heights. How she rebelled against its influence, and listened with nerves of steel, till in some sudden change of the melody her forced calm would give way, and for one trembling, blissful moment, her will would lie prostrate under the spell of his power. It was impossible for her to maintain an unmoved exterior; she felt in her inmost heart that he knew and triumphed in his power over her.

He was very cautious, very courteous; he had never breathed one word which it would have been wrong for her, an affianced wife, to hear. How could she condemn his attentions, so faultlessly rendered?

She had learned to express no preferences in his presence. She had one day spoken of a rare flower—she had gathered it often in her adventurous childhood, and she knew well the wild place where it grew, among rocks that were only to be reached by climbing, difficult and dangerous. She was sitting at her writing-desk the next evening, pen in hand, but the sheet with its dainty monogram still lay fair and white before her, as she looked dreamily out at the August sunset. A hand, rounded and supple, suddenly laid upon the page, cluster of the rare blossoms for which she had wished.

"Mr. Seymour, how beautiful! Ah! I know the trouble they cost. I am sorry. Did you go for them yourself?"

"I did, Miss Katharine, and should be glad to go again to-morrow, if I could bring a second time the look you wore a moment since."

"I must be more guarded," was her swift conclusion.

He did not leave her that night until every nerve had thrilled to his singing, and no wonder; he was an artist, in his way, and he had made her a study. There was one comfort—he never attempted to follow up his advantage. It was quite his way to rise from the piano at such times, and glide away with only a murmured "Good-night;" but it might not always be so. Still she had a strong assurance that if she had something tangible to contend with she could make a good fight yet. She knew she was loyal to the core, in spite of these nerve tremors. Surely she was not to blame for her singular susceptibility to the influence of music.

The next morning a little figure in a gray dress and marvellously stout boots scaled the height where Mr. Harold Seymour had been before, and gathered the few blossoms that had eluded his search. She found tokens of his struggle in various uprooted shrubs. His cane lay broken near the summit. She smiled as she noted the elegant trifles, of which he had evidently required staff duty in his enterprise.

John Bradshaw's dingy office was brightened next day by Kate's trophies. She would not have sent him one of the others for her right hand.

The October days came on apace. Only once, late in September, Mr. Bradshaw had rested from his labours, and spent a few days with his betrothed. He had met with an unexpected success, and he could not tell her by letter. The welcome story was told in John's own strong words. Rich and fine as his voice was in speaking, truthful in every tone, still he could not sing. If he could have thrilled her by that one gift as the other did! "That would be too much," she sighed at last. She did not say it aloud, however; her thoughts seemed running wild. Out of this tangle, the only words to which she gave utterance were these—

"John, I'm so proud of your success."

She would not be disloyal in thought even, and in sudden penitence for her moment of distraction, she laid her head upon his breast, where it had rested once before on that memorable night when he told the story of his love.

She had come to him of her own accord—and she was usually so shy—he smiled down upon her, caressing her hair. Taking her hand presently, he held it up to the light, narrowly examining the ring she wore—his plain gold ring—upon her forefinger.

"I'll put a diamond in its place one day, Katharine; but this must be your wedding-ring. I'll have it made smaller—slender little fingers!" he said, with sudden tenderness.

"I should prefer it to any other, John. You told me it was your mother's wedding-ring—how long did she wear it?"

A shadow fitted over his face.

"Only two years—she died when I was born."

Next morning, Mr. Bradshaw, sitting beside the fair lady whom the fortunes of travelling had made his nearest neighbour, vexed her somewhat by seeming perfectly unaware of her presence after the few acts of politeness which devolved on him were performed. Instead of improving his opportunities he looked steadily out of the windows, catching glimpses of green forest aisles with here and there a flush of true October scarlet. Once a mist came over his eyes—he was thinking of who would be beside him when next he should make that journey.

Mr. Harold Seymour came in that day, and almost without a word took his wonted place at the piano. He played for a while, then sang. Mr. Humphrey, sitting in his arm-chair in the corner, was lulled to sleep by the music. Kate, leaning back in her chair opposite, was quivering in every nerve as the spell was woven around her.

He left the instrument at length, not with his usual good-night, however. The room was half in shadow—she had not thought of lights in her absorption. He bent over her, caressing her hair with his hand. She felt his breath upon her forehead, and still she sat quiet, helplessly looking out into the darkness.

"Darling," was whispered by lips close to her cheek, "I think you are mine, therefore I claim my own."

"Mr. Seymour," she said, suddenly, springing up erect, "you forgot that you are speaking to a woman who is proud to say that she is John Bradshaw's promised wife."

She stood turning the ring upon her finger, her face white in the imperfect light. He felt he had gone too far.

"Forgive me," he said, humbly, as rising he stood before her. "I forgot the bar between us, and remembered only that I loved—as no one else can," he whispered, pausing before his last sentence. She vouchsafed no reply. "I was wrong," he said, gently. "Can you forgive me?"

"I will try to forget that you have shown me this courtesy, if I use no stronger word."

He stood silently before her a moment longer with bowed head; then without a word he went away. Fortunately she did not see him ten minutes after, when, giving way to the violence of his passion, his face almost livid as he strode down the road, he framed a wild wish while he ground the gravel under his heel that thus he could crush his rival.

He called on Miss Moore, if indeed his calls were intended for her benefit, several times before the approach of her wedding-day. She had to confess to herself that his conduct towards her now was unexceptionable. Always deferential, seeming in every tone to deprecate what had occurred, how could she continue to blame him for the unguarded utterance of one passionate moment?

John was to be with her on the twenty-first: the twenty-third was to be their wedding-day. Miss Moore herself drove to the train by which he was expected. It was an express train, and stopped but a moment. She stood quite by herself upon the platform, her bright hair blown back by the wind, cheeks and lips glowing. Glancing down the line of carriages, a sudden anxiety came into her eyes. It had not occurred to her before that her lover might fail to come. A gentleman approached her—a stranger, she thought.

"Miss Moore, I believe?"

She turned sharply.

"I am Miss Moore."

"I was commissioned to give you this."

A package, with a letter in the well-known handwriting.

Before she could reply, the bearer of the letter had stepped upon the train, and it was slowly moving off.

She went into the waiting-room to read her letter—a few hurried lines only:

"Charles Rand—you know him—has been and is desperately sick. He is making a hard fight, but there seems hardly a chance. To-morrow will decide. I shall be with you at the earliest possible moment thereafter. There seems nothing to do but to wait. You will pardon the annoyance and awkwardness, knowing the circumstances. Look for me by to-morrow evening's express. In any case, I shall be with you on the morning of the twenty-third. I am so wretchedly stupid, with the strain of wakefulness and incessant watching, that I half question my own identity; but you know where my heart is!"

The next day Mr. Humphrey went to the station, only to repeat the experience of his niece. He brought home his son, however, who had come to his cousin's wedding. He brought a telegram also, which was immediately sent up to Kate's room.

She opened it, and read simply this:

"Oct. 22nd, 2 P.M.—Charles is safe—shall try for the express."

He had failed to reach it evidently, but in a few hours more he would come. She went to a drawer,

and took from it the velvet-lined box containing her wedding-ring. Obeying a sudden impulse, she put it on; then went to meet her cousin, whose cheery voice was ringing through the house.

"Frank, I'm so glad to see you!" she said, as she found him half-way up the stairs on his way to her room.

"The bridegroom tarries," he said, laughing, as they went down together, "but I shall go myself to the morning train—providing I don't oversleep. He has given evidence that he's not a 'dastard in war,' but for the first half of the couplet I'm not so sure."

The colour rushed into Miss Moore's face.

"Mr. Bradshaw has good reason for delay; I did not really expect him to-night."

But Frank Humphrey's journey to the station next morning was as fruitless as the others had been. There was no message, and Mr. Bradshaw did not come.

"He has decided to come by the express, Kate, depend upon it; he'll be here an hour before the ceremony, even then."

In spite of all the wise precautions taken before-hand, it was a hurrying day, as wedding days are.

Mr. Humphrey, who had again gone to the station, did not return; the express train was late probably.

The guests arrived. The bride stood waiting in her room. Very beautiful she looked in her soft white draperies, but her eyes were troubled. She stood at the window looking far down the road, and was the first to see the carriage approaching. There was only one in it. She turned slowly away from the window, and herself took off her veil. Frank came to her door presently. His mother opened it—Kate had sunk into a chair as she heard his step.

"Something must have happened, Kate. Mr. Bradshaw did not come. I'll take the next train to London," he added; "you shall not have this suspense."

Then he went out, stopping, however, in the hall. "It's too hard," he said, hoarsely. "I should have drooped down if I had looked at her a minute longer. What can Bradshaw mean?"

Mrs. Humphrey went to her niece, and laid the drooping head upon her motherly bosom.

"Depend upon it, John is not to blame for this?"

"I have not lost my faith, aunt," she answered, steadily.

Frank came again, half an hour later.

"I won't see her, mother," he whispered; "but tell her I'll clear up this mystery before twenty-four hours have passed. I'll write or telegraph to-night."

In the silence that ensued they heard other carriage wheels than Frank's. The wedding guests were departing.

The mystery remained unsolved after many days of effort on Frank's part. Nothing could be learned of Mr. Bradshaw's movements after he left his home on the twenty-second, with scant time, his landlord thought, to reach the express train. He sent his telegram at two, and half an hour later started for the train. A porter had taken his baggage to the station, and there it was found, as he had given the man no directions about checking. He had drawn three hundred pounds from the bank the day before, leaving the large sum he had deposited there untouched. This was absolutely all that days of careful search revealed.

Kate clung, half acknowledging to herself that to rest in a certainty would be a relief, even though it was terrible certainty. Charley Rand had wavered back to life after many doubtful days, but he was for a long time too weak even to hear the strange story, and he had no recollection of Mr. Bradshaw's being with him when at length he was told. The landlord was the last person who had seen him, and had merely had a glimpse as he passed out at the door.

The weeks lengthened into months, and still there was no solution of the mystery. Mr. Harold Seymour's opinion, when it was asked, was by no means favourable to Mr. Bradshaw.

"A slippery fellow," he remarked, with a strange contraction of his black brows. "I'm not in the least surprised. I said, when I first heard of the engagement, that the marriage would never take place."

And Seymour ran his white hand through the masses of his curly black hair, and when pressed to know how he accounted for Bradshaw's disappearance, declined giving an opinion, with a smile and shake of the head which was enough to set a dozen rumours afloat. Mrs. Humphrey heard some of these strange stories, and strove diligently to keep the knowledge of them from her niece.

Miss Moore had borne her trouble well, people said; she did not lose flesh or colour, but her blue eyes had taken a wistful, anxious look, which they always wore when there seemed to be no reason for rousing herself. Harold Seymour came rather less frequently than formerly, but he came. Once he per-



JOHN BRADSHAW'S RETURN.]

suaded Kate to ride. The sunshine and the swift motion were exhilarating. Mrs. Humphrey thought Kate came back looking better than she had done for weeks. She said something which betrayed her feeling.

"We must try that tonic again, Miss Kate," Seymour said, softly, stooping towards her as he crossed the room to talk with Mr. Humphrey.

And so the spring passed. One afternoon Mrs. Humphrey was striving to knit—the heat seemed to preclude any attempt at labour; but she was a victim to the fallacy that knitting is simply a pastime, instead of being as severe a strain upon nerve and muscle as could well be invented. So she placed her low chair in the coolest corner of the shaded room, and was placidly knitting, when Kate passed through, evidently going out. Her aunt remonstrated.

"Wait till after tea, Kate—the sun is too hot. I never knew such breathless days at this season."

Miss Moore hid her face on her aunt's shoulder, half-kneeling before her as she did so. Presently she rose and went out. Mrs. Humphrey took off her spectacles, and deliberately wiped away two tears that were trickling down her cheeks.

Kate came back and took her usual place at the tea-table. Her cheeks were flushed, but she was quiet; her aunt's loving scrutiny detected nothing unusual, except, perhaps, an occasional nervous wandering of her hand to her head.

"You have given yourself a headache with your walk, Kate."

"I did not go far, aunt. There is a strange feeling in my head—a whirling sensation, not a headache."

Mrs. Humphrey's eyes followed her anxiously, as she again left the house. She saw her presently, walking up and down the garden paths. It was a pleasant place, this garden, with its carefully-tended old-fashioned flowers. A hedge divided it from the meadows in the rear. Through an opening in this leafy barrier the path wound among the fields to the

shaded river bank. Another gate opened directly into the road. Kate ceased walking at length, and leaning over this, looked listlessly down the long avenue of maples, which made the road at that point a very bower.

"The scarlet is coming into the leaves," she said, looking up. She thought her aunt had followed her, hearing a step upon the gravel.

"They are ripening early this year," was the answer; "the effects of the drought, probably."

She looked straight before her, and again her hand fluttered up to her forehead. She might have been surprised, but her reply, which did not come immediately, was commonplace enough.

"Very likely. Yet I've noticed that this large branch always turns earlier than the others."

He looked up, as she had done, into the mass of leaves hanging almost motionless in the twilight.

There was a pause.

Kate broke the silence at last.

"We had better go in, Mr. Seymour; the air seems damp."

"Damp!" he broke in with an energy quite unlike his usual slow, graceful speech. "The air is like a furnace—and the house will be closer yet."

"Kate!" he began, in a different tone.

"Harold!"

Her very tone was an entreaty.

"What—Oh! what is that? Something moved then, behind that tree."

"A shadow, Kate! There's nothing there," he answered, very much vexed at the interruption. She had called him "Harold." A new sensation that—he smiled to himself in the darkness. She was trembling, too; his quick ear detected the sound of her panting breath. That meant success—he had not felt positive before. His arm stole around her, mutely offering the support she needed.

"Harold Seymour," she said, "I am ashamed of the sudden weakness which has forced me to let you

me mistake for a moment. I am John Bradshaw's wife in the sight of Heaven. No other man shall take the place that would have been his. Since he is not with me, I will live alone all my days. I shall go to him, if he cannot come to me," she added, with a pathetic mournfulness which might have appealed to any heart.

He was awed for a moment by her solemnity—then the hopelessness of his cherished scheme burst upon him. For this he had planned and plotted; kept an iron hand on his fierce temper, never in one instance letting it have its way in her presence; and now to be told, when he thought his victory complete, that it was all in vain. John Bradshaw, living or dead, still held secure possession of the only heart he cared for on earth. He fairly ground his teeth in his rage; then sneered out:

"So you believe that precious villain is dead. Comfort yourself while you can with that assurance. I believe he ran away, and that he had weighty reasons for so doing. When you are convinced—mark my words!—that the man you have worshipped as a saint was a miserable poltroon, perhaps you will be prepared to value the love which to-day you are ready to trample under your feet. Till then, Miss Moore, farewell!"

He opened the gate near which he stood, and disappeared in the darkness. Kate had listened like one stunned. As he uttered his closing words she turned and fled down the path into the meadow. It was not so dark there as under the trees, and she knew every foot of the way. She had trod it often enough, within the last year, poor child! She reached the bank, and throwing herself prostrate upon the short dry grass, burst into tearless sobs. It was there she had lain that whole sultry afternoon, for in that spot she had sat with her lover a year ago, while he told her of his hopes and plans—the bright prospect that had opened before him. And while he talked, he was idly carving, as was his wont, some quaint design upon the trunk of the old beech under whose shade they sat.

Raising her head at length, she felt for the carriage, and found it. She passed her fingers caressingly over it; then pressing her lips passionately to the rough bark, she moaned aloud:

"Oh, John John!"

Suddenly she felt herself lifted in a strong embrace, and while in alarm she struggled to free herself, a voice—John's own—was murmuring above her:

"My poor, poor darling!"

She knew the voice, and strove no more. Again the strange sensation in her head; she was not quite herself to-night, surely, for in her swift surprise, looking up into the dear face that bent over her, her first words were:

"Oh, I know I am dreaming! Either stay, John, or take me with you!"

"My poor child! I am going to stay; nothing shall part us more. O! what have you thought of me? But I know, Katharine, from your own lips. You told him—it was I you saw under the tree, darling; he saw nothing, heard nothing, and he has the eye and ear of a wild animal, always had from a boy. It was worth what I had endured all these months—almost—to know that you had so kept your faith. I had paused, Kate, seeing you together, and thinking that you might have come to doubt me, as I have thought so many times in my agony you might, with justice." He stopped, then went on repeating his words:

"That you had come in time to doubt me, and had opened your heart to another. I had never dreamed of that in all my tortures, delirium, or the waking to consciousness; but I made up my mind, Kate, under the trees, to creep away silently as I came, if it were so, and never seek or speak to you." She shuddered, her hand creeping up into his.

"And you followed me here, John?"

"Yes, I could see your white dress before me."

"The same dress—this is the first time since; do you remember, I wore it a year ago to-day. You liked it with its rose-coloured ribbons."

"I have not forgotten."

He slipped a ring upon her forefinger, then held it up, faintly flashing in the starlight.

"Do you remember, sitting here a year ago to-day, I promised you a diamond? I did not think then I should go half round the world to get it, but so it has proved, as if like the knight of old I were in quest of adventures, instead of simply desiring to wed Katharine Moore. I suppose fearful things have been said of me?"

"I don't know, John."

"But where is the plain ring?" he said, suddenly missing it from her hand.

"Here, on my watch-guard. I've worn it here ever since."

"You must let me put that in its place to-morrow."

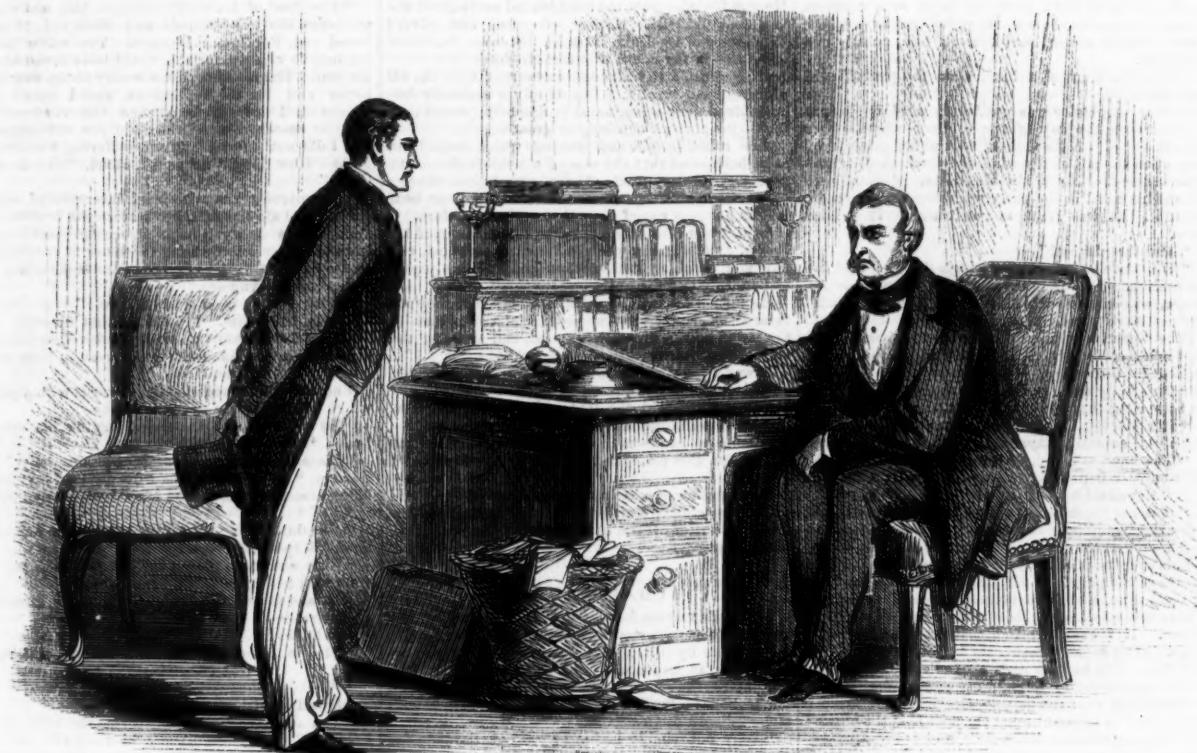
"To-morrow?"

"I have waited so long, Katherine!"

"To-morrow, then, let it be."

Precipitate, very; nevertheless, after so long a delay, "the wedding was furnished with guests."

A. L.



THE BIRTH MARK.

CHAPTER III.

THE whispered conversation which had passed between Miss Parnail and Dr. Kampton, just before the attack upon Carola, was brief and rapid, yet a series of atrocious and daring crimes was planned and determined during that short colloquy.

Laura Parnail was a woman of quick decision, fiery thought, energy and daring. Her son possessed fully the same formidable characteristics. Years of security had not dulled her perception or blunted her shrewdness. In her early womanhood she had perpetrated a most cruel and criminal deed, and the consequences of that act she saw confronting her suddenly. Yet she was not unprepared.

Startled, amazed, for a moment dismayed, she was; but the firmness or rather hardness of her soul quickly repelled all thought of yielding to the force of unexpected assault.

Her sense of security in crime had sustained four serious attacks within less than an hour.

One after another in rapid succession, like masked batteries suddenly opening upon the straggling, ambushed army, four dangerous facts had hurled their menaces against her, viz.:

The fact that in the house of the fortune-teller was a man with an arrow-shaped birth mark upon the left temple.

The fact that Senora Golari was with this man, assisted by two persons named Lucane and Lauretta.

The fact that Pedro Diaz was in the opposite house, and had recognised her.

The fact that James Raymond, a keen, resolute, scheming lawyer, a man who had witnessed her crime, intended to use his knowledge to foil her plans—perhaps to ruin her.

Why Laura Parnail decided these four facts will be revealed as we progress.

James Raymond, seated in his law-office while that which we have narrated was transpiring, was a hard-featured man over fifty-five years of age. No one could doubt that in his youth he was handsome, though years of practice as a lawyer in criminal as well as civil courts, had made him stern of aspect and sceptical in character. Proud, reserved, and avaricious, he had no associates—his cold and cautious nature forbidding alike friendship and familiarity.

This man, so dangerous to Laura Parnail, was in the house of Senora Golari within an hour after that visit described by Dr. Kampton.

[PLAYBANK RECEIVES INSTRUCTIONS.]

He did not go uninvited. A man so totally sceptical in character would laugh at the thought of consulting a fortune-teller. He had heard of this famous Senora Golari, and of her many deeds of charity. He had discussed the matter in his mind, and dismissed it with the muttered thought:

"She is nothing but an impostor. Her charity is puff to inflate her reputation."

But that morning a perfumed note was left upon his desk—his clerk said by a man whose air and accent smacked of Spain.

"He said it was from the fortune-teller, Senora Golari," was the remark of the clerk.

"From the fortune-teller," sneered the lawyer. "Perhaps she has need of my services to aid her to escape the consequences of some rascality in her disreputable trade."

He took up the note carelessly, but as his eye fell upon his name, written in a free, bold hand, foreign in its character, yet perfect in its formation, he changed colour and sighed profoundly.

He did not break the tiny seal of purple wax until he had locked the door of his private office. As he closed the door, his clerk observed that he was ghastly pale, and that his lips quivered with emotion.

Alone in his private office, James Raymond placed the perfumed note, still unopened, upon a table, and sitting down, gazed steadily upon the delicate superscription.

"I have not seen this writing for many years," he said, half aloud; "yet I recognise it instantly. The same perfume, the same coloured wax. So she lives, and at the fortune-teller's—at the house of a licensed impostor."

"What a descent! what a fall! Shall I read it, or return it untouched? It is strange that she should have wandered to this city, especially at this time. Did she come to seek James Raymond, to tell him that the love she once so haughtily spurned she will now gladly receive? Too late, lady! The heart of James Raymond is ashes, or stone, or gall, and your rejection transformed it. But I will read and decide. I did not think, lady, that the sight of your writing, the scent of your favourite perfume could make a heart of ice glow like a red-hot coal."

He broke the seal, and from the rosy-hued envelope drew a billet. Its contents were brief, and thus:

"SEÑOR JAMES RAYMOND.—You will find at Senora Golari's one who will be pleased to see you. Will you come? or must she seek you? I do not wish to deceive you, señor. He who I loved when last you and I met, I love now—not less, but more

than I loved him then. I need your aid and advice. Will you come?"

L."

James Raymond frowned long and heavily over these lines, and his thoughts framed themselves into muttered words, thus:

"She is very frank, at least. The man whom she loved she still loves. Well, it matters little to me now. I used to hate him. He is indifferent to me now, and has been for many a year. She seems to think it probable that I still yearn for her love. That is all past now. Gold is my mistress, my lady; and if there is any love left in my calcined heart, it is for my son Alfred. She needs my advice and aid. She shall have it; but I have forgotten how to give either. I always ask and receive pay before I bestow either. I will call at this fortune-teller's."

He folded the note carefully, filed it with other papers, and for some time busied himself with the affairs of his office. His clerk—or rather his chief clerk, for he had several—at length tapped at the door, and was admitted.

"Well, Mr. Starling?" said the lawyer.

"A stranger desires to see you, sir; he calls himself Playbank. Here is his card."

"Send him in," replied the grave lawyer, after glancing at the card.

The clerk retired, and soon after Mr. Playbank entered the private office and bowed.

Mr. Playbank was a small, thin man, iron-visaged, pale, keen-eyed, rapid in movement, quick in speech, beardless, and sleek. There was much about the man which reminded one of a hungry, half-starved squirrel, or of a weasel. His step and gestures were rapid, but noiseless; his voice was soft and strong, clear and distinct. He was clad in plain black, neatly cut, and close fitting.

He bowed and said:

"Just from London. In answer to your letter."

"You are the detective, Roger Playbank?" asked the lawyer, attentively studying his face.

"I am. The business and the pay."

"Sit down."

Mr. Playbank was in a chair in an instant. Any other man would have made some noise in taking a seat—a rustle, or the scraping of a foot. Mr. Playbank was as noiseless as a shadow. He was in his seat, cool, observant, ready at once. His bright, small eyes swept over the whole office like a flash. He saw everything at a glance, put it away in his mind, and fixed his sagacious gaze upon the lawyer.

"My house was robbed two weeks ago of a large amount of plate, and several hundred pounds in gold and notes. I can find no clue to the robber but these," said Mr. Raymond, opening a desk and taking out

first a cake of hard putty as large as a common desert plate, and then a small roll of paper in which was a wad of coarse, curly, black hair, grizzly and scorched.

"I see the print of a hand upon the putty," said the detective.

"Yes. A glazier was putting in window-glass at my house on the day of the robbery—the robbery was at night. A tin dish of soft putty was left by him upon the sill of the window by which the burglar entered. No doubt the latter, in getting in placed his hand in the putty, pressing all his weight upon it. It was fresh and soft then. It is hard now."

"And the glazier?"

"Was not the burglar. The glazier bears a high reputation. He was taken sick while at work in my house, was carried to his bed, and I know that he did not leave it until yesterday."

The detective studied the hardened impression of the hand carefully. The whole palm was deeply copied in the putty. The whole weight of the burglar's body must have rested there for an instant, as he sprung through the window.

"It is the left hand."

"Yes," said Mr. Raymond.

"The hand is broad, the fingers short and thick. The burglar is probably a short, muscular man."

Mr. Raymond nodded.

"It is not the hand of a gentleman, nor yet of a labouring man," said the detective, who, as he turned and peered at the hardened mass, resembled a squirrel playing with a nut. "There is a star in the centre of the palm. I should say that the burglar, at some time, had been pierced through the hand. There is a small scar, also, at the end of the little finger. If I ever see that hand I shall know it. What is this? Hair?—burnt?"

"Yes. The burglar used a candle, and doubtless in his eagerness in forcing my plate-chest, leaned his head too near the flame. His hair took fire. I gathered this remnant upon the floor near the chest."

"The burglar has black hair, and is not a young man. I will take charge of this," said the detective.

He then made a sketch of the impression in the putty. He sketched rapidly and perfectly. The sketch finished, he folded it carefully and slipped it into his pocket.

"Now," he said, nibbling his pencil.

"Here is a descriptive list of the stolen plate," remarked the lawyer.

Mr. Flaybank ran his eyes over the list, and put it into his pocket.

"Do you suspect anyone?"

"Yes. There is a foreigner in the city, a Spaniard or Portuguese, who calls himself Don Pedro del Amazon. I suspect him," replied the lawyer.

"Why?"

"I am sure that I saw him many years ago in Spain, at Madrid."

"Why do you suspect him? And if you suspect him, why do you not have him arrested?"

"I suspect him because I know he is not what he assumes to be. I never arrest until I am sure of the criminal. I have sent for you to make me sure. Your reward shall be one thousand pounds, two hundred in advance, provided you recover the plate and make sure of the conviction of the burglar. If you fail, your expenses and two hundred pounds."

"Very well. Put it in writing, and I will to work at once."

The lawyer drew up the necessary papers, signed them, and gave them, with bills to the amount of two hundred pounds, to the detective.

Mr. Flaybank put them all into his waistcoat pockets, and after some farther conversation retired.

The lawyer soon after left his office, and directed his steps towards the fortune-teller's.

On his way thither he saw coming towards him no other than Don Pedro del Amazon. On the other side of the street glided Mr. Flaybank. But Don Pedro saw Mr. Flaybank before he saw the approaching lawyer, and after a sharp glance at him turned abruptly and disappeared.

The lawyer soon after met the detective, who whispered as he glided by:

"That fellow is your Don Pedro. He has just left the fortune-teller's. He evidently knows me, yet I do not know him. I will change my appearance."

It was not long before he announced his presence at the door of the fortune-teller's residence. His summons was answered by the man-servant, who ushered him into a parlour, saying:

"The senor will please be seated. The lady will soon appear."

"I have seen that man before," mused the lawyer, as he sat down and leaned his head upon his hand. "I think in Spain. He is probably one of the domestics whom I used to observe about the palace of the Duchess Del Parma. Ah, I remember the man.

He and his wife were the confidential servants of the Countess Isabella. Livery of green and silver! The livery of the Duke D'Ossiri. Strange that these should be in the house of a fortune-teller!"

He glanced about him and was struck with the air of munificent wealth. But his eyes suddenly became fixed upon a large and gorgeously-framed portrait—the portrait of a lady of great beauty.

The robes, jewels, and coronet which decked the lady, betokened that she was of a noble and opulent family, yet the mind of the gray-haired lawyer dwelt not upon these things. He felt his heart beat fast as his eyes gazed upon that enchanting face.

"Oh, heart!" he said, crossing his hands upon his breast. "I thought you dead, or ice, or stone, and now you throb at sight of that face, as fiercely passionate as you did eighteen years ago."

He turned his eyes away with a sigh, and they fell upon another portrait—the portrait of a gentleman in the uniform of a Spanish general, and wearing the regalia of a duke.

It was a lofty, majestic face, with dark, proud eyes, a face to admire and to respect.

"D'Ossiri!" said the lawyer. "Lofty in face, lofty in heart, lofty in rank—ah, the plain, untitled Englishman had small chance to win when you strove for the prize, and that prize the heart of a woman."

The rustling of a satin robe, the scent of a rare and delicate perfume, startled him. He turned and beheld the writer of the note, Senora Goliari, the fortune-teller.

CHAPTER IV.

JAMES RAYMOND, however, did not know that the writer of the note was Senora Goliari. He did not address her by that name—a name which he associated with an impostor—a licensed plunderer of the silly and credulous.

"Isabella! Pardon me, my lady, Duchess D'Ossiri—"

"Why not simply Isabella?" asked the lady, as she gave him her beautiful hand with quenched grace. "We were once intimate friends in Spain. You called me Isabella, and I called you James."

"Yes—until you rejected my love—"

"But not your friendship," she said, quickly, with a warm smile. And then I could not accept your love, for I had pledged it to another before I saw you, my friend."

"And I was already near forty, and a widower. Ah, I was foolish, infatuated, Isabella. You were beautiful then—you are more beautiful now! Then it was the beauty of the maiden; now it is the splendour of the full-grown woman!"

He had her hand in his. His eyes were devouring her magnificent beauty of face and form. She blushed deeply, and gently withdrew her hand.

"There," he said, in a cold and steady voice, "it has passed. My heart but sprang to do brief homage to its former idol. You are married, or were. Does he live?"

"He lives, James," she replied, her voice and her face full of sadness. "Do you wish to see him?"

"I—no! Why? Can I wish to see the man whose superiority robbed me of my soul's desire?" he answered, severely.

"My husband is my life, James Raymond," she said, not haughtily, but firmly. "Do you hate him because he loved me? How unusual! Do you hate him because I love him? Would you hate yourself if I loved you? James, you were once a noble, generous-hearted man—"

"Yes, until your rejection turned my virtues to vices! No more of what I was. I know what I am—unworthy."

She sighed and gazed reproachfully upon him for a moment, and then, throwing open the folding doors, said:

"You shall see him, James. Look at him. That is my husband—and I love him!"

James Raymond saw a gentleman, clad in the gorgeous costume of a Spanish grande, standing in the centre of the adjoining room. This gentleman, tall, handsome, majestic in face and form, seemed staring at vacancy; he did not speak—he did not move his eyes, nor a muscle of his face—he stood erect, silent and motionless.

Not far behind him stood Lucane, the servant, who had admitted the lawyer. Lucane's eyes were vigilant and keen, and all their vigilance was serving his lord.

"He has no mind—he is insane!" said the lady, averting her face to hide her tears.

"D'Ossiri insane! His was one of the most powerful minds in Spain! What terrible calamity has terminated his reason?—sickness?"

"He has never been sick, except at heart. The loss of our babe—she was stolen—ruined the noble mind of my poor husband!"

"The loss of his child wrought this sad work," muttered the lawyer, pale and dismayed. "Ah, I hated you, Ferdinand D'Ossiri. You robbed me of my heart's vitality, for she would have loved me but for you. You made my life a weary tramp over dead hopes and blasted aspirations, and I hated you. Therefore I did not fear when the vengeance of another snatched away the child you worshipped—yet I did not know that your suffering would be so great. How long," he asked, aloud, "has he been thus?"

"Seventeen years, with brief intervals of sanity. All medical aid has failed to restore the health of his mind. His sanity returns at regular periods, and lasts a few days. But during those few days he broods so deeply upon his loss that his mind sinks again, and he becomes as you see."

"Why does he wear that costume?"

"It is his whim. I yield all that he asks. Ah, Ferdinand, my unfortunate, my beloved husband, I would die a thousand deaths to restore your noble mind."

The duchess pronounced these words with a pathos which moistened the eyes of Lucane.

"My wife?" said the duke, turning his eyes to her. "Ah, I am faint."

"His sonnes are returning to him, my lady," said Lucane. "It is always thus with my lord just before he regains for a short time his reason. Say nothing to him."

"The duke sank into a seat, and Lucane supported his head upon his bosom.

"This servant is much attached to the duke," remarked the lawyer.

"Lucane is very true to us. He is our household physician—"

"In livery?"

"That is to serve my plans in my part of fortune-teller."

"What! Then you are Senora Goliari! The Duchess D'Ossiri a fortune-teller?"

"You are surprised; yet wild as the scheme was. I think—I hope that I have gained a clue. At least, I have found a hope. It may prove false, as have a thousand others; yet, if I did not hope my brain would become wild, I should go insane too," said the duchess.

"I do not understand you."

"I will explain. Seventeen years ago, our infant daughter was stolen from the D'Ossiri palace at midnight, by its nurse, Marie La Forge! I afterwards discovered that the nurse who committed this crime was the vindictive Countess de Parma, who had disguised herself to steal the child."

"The Countess de Parma was madly in love with Ferdinand, Duke D'Ossiri, was she not?"

"Yes, and swore bitter revenge when he became my husband. She also hated me, personally, and in addition to this there was an ancient feud between our families."

"The countess was older, by several years, than the duke."

"Yes, and, several years before she saw him made a disgraceful alliance with Pedro Diaz, a Portuguese. The influence of her family procured a divorce from Pedro Diaz. She was the woman who stole our child, and at the same time jewels to an immense amount. Fortunately the duke was very rich, or the loss of the jewels would have been very severe. As it was, we thought nothing of the jewels, for the child was also stolen."

"The countess fled, nor have we heard from her from that day to this. I do not know why I imagined that as a fortune-teller I might obtain some tidings of the stolen child. I know that fortune-tellers see closely all classes of society, and I resolved to travel over the world, inquiring, seeking, hoping. To-day I have seen Pedro Diaz, the former husband of Inez, Countess de Parma."

"Ah, you have seen him?" asked the lawyer, earnestly. "What did he want? Did he know you?"

"He is very superstitious. He came to have his fortune told. I think he recognised me, though he said nothing of that."

"He is very cunning," remarked the lawyer. "In telling his fortune you examined his palms?"

"Yes, and coarse, ugly palms they were."

"The left hand with a scar, as from a shot?—and with a scar upon his finger?" asked the lawyer.

"Yes, his heavy hand, the left I think, was so marked," replied the duchess. "Why?"

"No matter. Tell me what else he gave, and why he gave it."

"He is a rude, savage fellow, and yet superstitious. He tried to swagger when he came in, and to scoff at my art. Lucane had recognised him when he admitted him; and, of course, informed me. Therefore, I easily cowed my savage by revealing to him many facts of his notorious life in Spain, and it was while he sat trembling with terror that I abruptly asked:

"Pedro Diaz, as you hope to live a day longer, where is the countess de Parma, once your wife?"

"He replied, instantly:

"She is in this city!"

"What! He said that!" exclaimed the lawyer, by no means pleased at this.

"Yes, sir; and the emotion which I at that instant displayed, for my feelings overpowered me, doubtless led him to suspect my identity," replied the duchess. "His terror, which arose from a belief in my supernatural powers, instantly vanished. The yellow paleness of his countenance was succeeded by a burning flush of rage. If he recognised me, as I have little doubt that he did, he at once divined why I knew so much of his past life—not from the power of witchcraft or sorcery, in which he is a firm believer, but from actual knowledge of his life and brigand career. He frowned, and half rose from his seat. His lips quivered with a suppressed malodiction, and then he resumed his seat, with a stolid, sullen air."

"I have no doubt that he recognised you as the Duchess D'Ossiri," said the lawyer. "And after that?"

"I suspected that he had recognised me, for he often saw me in Madrid, and he once served under my husband as a captain against the brigands of Calabria, whom he afterwards joined.

"Your former wife," I said, in as calm a tone as I could command, "stole the infant daughter of a noble Spanish family. The heads of that family will pay a great reward for the recovery of that child."

"How great?" he demanded, while his eyes gleamed with excitement. Ah, my friend, you cannot imagine how my heart leaped with hope as I remarked that gleaming of his eyes, that eagerness of his speech. I was then confident that I had at last gotten upon the track of the lost one—of my darling Perdita.

"Whoever restores the Countess Perdita to the Duke or Duchess D'Ossiri, I replied, will receive in gold five thousand pistoles, or say 3,825L."

"The daughter of a duke, a rich duke like the Duke D'Ossiri, is worth more than that," he said, dryly.

"Name the price," I continued.

"Say 5,000L."

"It is a large sum," I answered, "yet I am not afraid to say that it will be cheerfully paid."

"When shall I find the duke or the duchess, in case to be my luck to discover the Countess Perdita?" he demanded.

"I am their agent. I will see that the money be paid promptly."

"My heart was so full that it was with extreme difficulty that I preserved my calmness. He opened his square, coarse hands, and said:

"A hundred pounds in advance."

"Without a word I placed a small sack of golden coin in that insolent hand, and as he secured it in his pocket, he said:

"Be ready to pay the rest to-morrow, senora, for if I live the lost child shall be in this house."

"With these words he arose and swaggered away."

"And you believe this scoundrel?" asked the lawyer.

"My heart bids me hope. I hope," replied the duchess, raising her beautiful eyes towards heaven, and clasping her hands.

"That Portuguese will be ahead of me," thought the avaricious lawyer, whose lingering sentiment of love did not blind him to his own interest. Five thousand pounds is a large sum, but the duke is worth millions, and I must have a share—large share."

The duchess, little suspecting his mercenary thoughts, continued:

"Ah, if my lost child should be restored to me, may she be pure, refined, beautiful. Yet I tremble when I remember the evil and vindictive nature of Inez de Parma. There was a lovely girl here yesterday, so radiant, so pure, so fair, so guileless. Ah, if my Perdita proves to be like that girl, like Carola Fairmont!"

"Eh? Like who?" cried the lawyer, as his blood rushed to his heart.

"Like that vision of beauty and purity, Carola Fairmont, I heard her companion call her."

"She was here? You spoke to her?"

"Yes, and I could not refrain from embracing and kissing the lovely girl," replied the duchess, passionately. "She is to call again to-morrow, I made the appointment, because my heart leaps towards her. Do you know Carola Fairmont?"

"Know her? Why she is the betrothed wife of my only son."

"Ah, I am glad of that. I hope he is worthy of her?"

"Of course he is! But now tell me why you need my aid and advice?"

During this conversation the afflicted duke was in a profound slumber, his head resting upon the faithful bosom of Lucane Gomez. He heard nothing. He knew nothing. From time to time Lucane bent over the sleeping form and studied it anxiously. After each examination he would sigh and raise his eyes to heaven. He was praying that his beloved lord might regain his mind and retain it.

"Do you know a person named Dr. Robert Kampton?" asked the duchess, in answer to the lawyer.

James Raymond had long schooled his face and mind against betraying surprise, yet he started as he heard this question.

"Come," he thought, wiping the sudden perspiration from his forehead, "events are crowding each other. Kampton, the son, no doubt of Inez de Parma; Miss Laura Parnail she calls herself! Why does the duchess ask me this?"

"Kampton? Ah, I have seen him," he replied, carelessly.

"He was here not long since. To-day?"

"Here to-day! And what sent that sceptic here?"

"I do not know, my friend, for I fainted the instant I saw him."

"Oh, fainted? That was weakness. Why did you faint?"

"Because he was so fearfully like Inez de Parma when I knew her," replied the duchess, shuddering. "Is he a native of this country? Do you, who know so many, 'tis said, know anything of his origin?"

"He is the nephew of Miss Laura Parnail."

"The aunt of Carola Fairmont! Her cousin? Impossible!" exclaimed the duchess.

"So I think," said the lawyer. "But why send for me?"

"To ask you to learn all that you can about Dr. Robert Kampton, and to be present to-morrow to meet Pedro Diaz."

"Why be present?"

"You are a lawyer. He may attempt to impose a stranger upon me as my child. You are accustomed to brow-beat and overcome great criminals. Will you come?"

"Wait. Suppose this Carola Fairmont—around whom I confess there is much mystery—suppose she should prove to be thy lost child?"

"Then I would thank heaven daily—hourly, all my life!" exclaimed the duchess. "Ah, in playing fortune-teller, my friend, I have learned to read human nature as a book, and if ever a maiden was pure, Carola is, and kind, and noble, and—"

"Yes, yes. She is all that, and more, or James

Raymond would never have encouraged his only son to woo her to be his wife. But if she should prove to be your daughter, of course my son, a plain, untitled, and not exceedingly rich Englishman, could no longer aspire to be her husband."

"If he is worthy, and honourable—"

"Stop, my lady," cried the lawyer; "this is all an if. If Pedro Diaz brings your lost daughter here to-morrow, and you are satisfied that she is your child, beyond all doubt, and the duke has one of his lucid intervals, what will you do, Dr. Lucane?"

Lucane, thus suddenly addressed, replied in a low, distinct voice:

"Then we will take the recovered Countess Perdita to my lord duke, her father. If the same proofs convince my lord, he will embrace her. His joy being perpetual—for she will be in his presence every hour—will annihilate his insanity, will rapidly heal and fully restore his mind to permanent health. Then my lord duke, by the grace of heaven, will never lose his reason again!"

"Oh, great and merciful Father!" cried the duchess, profoundly excited by the words of Lucane, and falling upon her knees, "grant that all this may come to pass! Restore to my afflicted husband his sound and clear reason! Restore to us our lost child!"

Her emotions here overpowered her speech, and she sobbed aloud.

CHAPTER V.

THE crafty lawyer, whose silence of years had lengthened this heartrending grief, whose envy and jealousy of the unfortunate duke had held him inactive when—years before—he had witnessed the abduction of the infant countess, said nothing until the duchess conquered her feelings and arose.

"Listen, Isabella," he said, assuming a generous frankness of tone and manner; "you and your husband have not suffered alone. I, too, have suffered with a burning heart and brain. I love my son, and I do not wish that he shall endure the sorrow that has cumbered my heart. Yes, Lucane would do as he says, and the haughty Ferdinand D'Ossiri, who never liked James Raymond, would refuse to receive Alfred Raymond as his son-in-law—should this lady, Carola Fairmont, prove to be the lost Countess Perdita. I, alone, can produce convincing proofs, no

matter whom this renegade, Pedro Diaz, may bring forward as your daughter."

"You! And you, James Raymond, will fail to aid us!" exclaimed the duchess.

"My lady, my son loves Carola as I loved you. I shall not aid in crushing his heart as my heart was crushed. What you have told me this morning startles me."

"And I, my friend, have no wish to crush the heart of your son. I do not know him. I have never seen him. He may be unworthy to become a member of our family—"

"My word, lady. I have said that he is honest and honourable. He is noble in person and in mind. He is worthy of any woman, peasant or princess. All will tell you that I am indefatigable in finding evidence. I tremble to think Carola Fairmont is the lost countess. The mind of the duke will remain insane unless in a lucid interval he be convinced that he has recovered his child. You know that. You love him. I love my son. Yet a thousand Pedro Dizases, with a thousand times all the evidence he will be able to present, cannot convince the duke if I attack that evidence."

"You insist upon my consent to the marriage of your son with Carola Fairmont, should she be produced as my child."

"I think, from what you have told me that I can prove her identity with that of the countess," replied the lawyer. "I know that I alone, except Inez de Parma, can prove it. Yes, my son's happiness for the permanent restoration of your husband's reason, for your stolen child. If Carola is not your child, I will give you my aid and ask nothing. But the heart of my son shall not by any help of mine be put where his father's was crushed—under the heel of Ferdinand Duke D'Ossiri!"

"So pure a maiden would not bestow her love unworthily," said the perplexed duchess. "I give my consent. Remember, however," she added, "that I give my consent with the provision that he is beloved by my daughter."

"It shall be so stipulated in the marriage contract," replied the lawyer. "No doubt you are so empowered to act for the duke in all legal matters, he not being, in general, able to—"

"I am fully empowered," interrupted the duchess, coldly, "by the authority of the Crown of Spain, and also by papers drawn by the duke during one of his lucid intervals."

She opened a secretaire, and placed before the cautious lawyer a package of papers.

He examined them carefully, found them correct, and began to write a legal document, in duplicate, which purported to be a marriage contract between Alfred Raymond and Perdita, Countess of Spala, only daughter of Ferdinand del Oliona, Duke d'Ossiri.

The duchess regarded this cold, scheming man of law with steady gaze.

"Thank heaven," she thought, "I did not return this man's love. How cold, austere, mercenary!"

But James Raymond had not always been cold, austere and mercenary. In his youth, in his early manhood, he was frank, generous and impulsive. The great change in his character had been slowly wrought by the rejection of his love by the Duchess d'Ossiri. This had soured his soul, although he was more than thirty years old when he first saw Isabella, then Countess de Parma.

His wife, the mother of the son whom he loved so well, had not been his own but his father's choice, and their union, though peaceful, was not happy. When Mrs. Raymond died, soon after the birth of Alfred, his grief was that of respect, and not that of love. Thus his first and only passion devoted his heart to the young Countess Isabella, and by her rejection that heart was embittered, life became a mere struggle, until his soul became centered in the welfare of his son.

The duchess, however, did not dwell long upon the mercenary character of James Raymond. Her noble and generous disposition soon rejected the bitter thought which had risen against him.

"He loves his son," she mused. "He has suffered years of heart agony, and all because he loved me. He wishes to defend the heart of his son. Why should I not admire instead of condemning him? Should I not rejoice with hope when I see this sagacious lawyer apparently convinced that Carola is my child—so convinced that he guards the heart of his son against the possible circumstances which may follow full proof?"

Lucane Gomez, who loved nothing and nobody, not even his wife, except the duke and duchess, regarded the lawyer simply as a fox, and muttered in his beard:

"Ho! If the countess does not love your son, or if he is unworthy of her, I may have something to do. I do not say it aloud, because I cannot prove it, but something tells me that you had something to do

with the abduction of the infant countess. If you are a lawyer, Lucane Gomez will have a settlement to make with you in which he will not use a pen, but a dagger! There will be no paper stained with ink, but something stained with blood."

At this moment the lawyer raised his eyes. They met those of Lucane, and instantly read his thoughts.

"That man would be a dangerous enemy," mused James Raymond. "Evidently he dislikes me. But I shall move too fast for him."

He wrote on, and soon after read aloud what he had written.

The substance of the writing was, that in case Miss Carola Fairmont proved to be the lost Countess Perdita, she was to be married immediately to Alfred Raymond; that if Carola was not the lost countess James Raymond would devote his services gratuitously to the search for the lost daughter; that when Alfred Raymond became the husband of the lost countess she should make him master and owner of three hundred thousand pounds in gold, and of certain estates in Spain as specified; that if James Raymond proved Carola to be the lost countess he was to receive for his services one hundred thousand pounds; and, finally, that Alfred Raymond and his wife, the countess, should be joint heirs of the Duke and Duchess D'Ossiri.

"What will a mother not give to recover her long lost, dearly beloved child?" said the duchess, instantly signing the writings. "Come, Lucane, and witness this contract. Call Lauretta."

Lucane and the duchess exchanged places. The duchess supported the head of her sleeping husband upon her bosom, and Lucane advanced to the lawyer and grasped the pen.

"You drive a bargain with the noble and afflicted like a Jew," said Lucane, in a fierce whisper, as he darted a glance at the lawyer.

"And you are insolent, like an ill-bred boor, retorted the lawyer, with icy contempt. "Sign."

"I sign because the duchess commands. I would not even wink my eye for you," said the Spaniard, signing his name furiously.

Lauretta, the stern-faced wife of Lucane, being summoned, appeared, and added her name as witness.

James Raymond secured the contract in his pocket-book, and said, gravely:

"My lady, you may regard my conduct as unworthy of that James Raymond whom you knew in Spain. But I am not the same man. Time, care, and disappointment have changed me. I am hard and worldly. I do not wish my son to become the same. If Alfred were not worthy of Carola, though she were a queen, I would tear this contract to atoms. Pedro Diaz boasted that you should see your lost daughter to-morrow. He does not know those with whom he has to deal. To-morrow Pedro Diaz will be in prison. But if I live, your mind and heart will be relieved of doubt."

"Then you know where to find the infamous Inez de Parma?" exclaimed the duchess.

"Of course he does," thought Lucane. "No doubt he and she are accomplices."

"I know where she is, and to-morrow we will call upon her."

"Ah, I have no desire to see her."

"And have you no desire to punish her, my lady?"

"None. If I may recover my lost child, I will forgive Inez de Parma."

"But I will not," swore Lucane in his mind. "I will punish the wretch."

"Still you must see her. Either in this house or in hers."

The lawyer then withdrew and returned to his office to write that note to Carola Fairmont which we have seen.

This note he enclosed in one to his son, enjoining upon him to propose to Carola, and on her acceptance to give her the note, and afterwards to escort her to his house.

"They shall be married to-night," thought the lawyer. "Should the duke regain his reason he may forbid the marriage and dispute the contract. No doubt the duchess will declare in its favour, but I know that the duke disliked me. I will make all sure, for Carola is the lost countess. Of that I have no doubt. Once married, the duke cannot separate them, and by Spanish law she is his heiress. To save appearances they must be married without my knowledge—apparently. I will arrange that when I leave the office. At present I have a mass of business to reduce."

He had hardly begun work when a clerk tapped at the door.

"Why am I interrupted?" cried the lawyer, as he opened the door, impatiently. "Deny me to all—to all, you understand!" he said to the clerk.

"This is a lady."

"No matter. I have had too much of ladies al-

ready. They are wearisome, impatient clients, and talk my time away."

"This is a most beautiful lady—charming, fascinating—"

"I will not see her, were she Helen of Troy—were she Venus herself? Ah, it seems she has followed you—"

"Sir," said a lady, clad in deep black, and whose heavy veil concealed every feature, "you will pardon my intrusion, I am sure. A few minutes of your time is all I ask—and I am able to pay you well."

James Raymond trembled as he heard that voice.

"Great heaven!" he thought, "the duchess has followed me to my private office! For what?"

He bowed, and replied:

"Enter, lady."

"Ah, thought the clerk, as he moved away, "had he seen her face as I did, he would not say 'enter, lady,' in that tone!"

But James Raymond had not seen the face. He had heard the voice, and his leaping heart seemed to say:

"Man of marble! this heart is not all ice! Why do I thrill, as I hear her voice? Is it because I still madly love her? You left her but a few moments ago—left her with no emotion, and thinking only of her and your son. I say that the sound of her voice electrified me. I love her still!"

The veiled lady entered and sat near a desk. She sat opposite to a window, and the last rays of the declining sun fell upon her form.

"It is not the duchess," thought the lawyer, regarding her steadily. "The duchess is larger, more squarely. But the voice?"

"Your name, lady?" he asked.

"I do not know that I have a right to a name," replied that sweet, soft voice, every tone of which vibrated the soul of the lawyer. "I have come to you to see if a lawyer can prove my right to a name."

"I am unable to comprehend you, lady. I am no riddle solver," said Mr. Raymond, with grave politeness.

The lady raised her heavy veil, and revealed a lovely face.

"Great heaven!" exclaimed Mr. Raymond, pale and greatly excited as he stared at this countenance. "What a resemblance!"

"To whom, sir?" asked the young lady, calmly.

She could not have been more than eighteen years of age, yet she possessed the air and ease of one who had seen much of the world. Her dress and adornments were those of one of wealth and fashion.

"A resemblance to whom I ask," she repeated, as her brilliant dark eyes met those of the astonished lawyer.

"To—to—an acquaintance of mine," he stammered, bewildered by the surprise and the startling resemblance.

"Why not say to Isabella, the Duchess D'Ossiri?" demanded the lady.

The question was as profound a subject for wonder to James Raymond as the mysterious resemblance.

"You have seen the duchess?" he asked.

"Never. Yet you have, I know not how recently," said the lady. "You knew her in Spain. You loved her."

"Ah! who told you this?"

"You may learn, if you will be my friend."

"Your friend, in what, my lady?"

"In proving my right to a name."

"But you must bear some name already, lady?"

"True. I am called Senora Zarettta, though I am unmarried."

"I have heard of a celebrated prima donna of that name."

"I am she. But I have no right to the name of Zarettta. I have sought you to claim a name."

"Go on, lady. Let me hear all, and I will reply," said the lawyer, pressing his hand to his forehead, and mentally exclaiming:

"Oh, heaven! To what is all this leading? Who is she? What does she mean? I am amazed, bewildered."

"I am about to speak of the Duke and Duchess D'Ossiri. I claim to be their lost daughter—the lost countess."

"Ah, this is astounding," thought the lawyer staring at the fair speaker. "If this is the lost countess, what becomes of my contract with the duchess? I am pledged to serve without reward."

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

ANOTHER ATLANTIC CABLE.—We understand that, in the course of the month of October, the frequently mooted project for an Atlantic Cable from the Orkneys, via the Faroe Islands, to Quebec, will have taken definite form and be brought before the public

The cable, which will connect Thurso with the Orkneys; to be laid down immediately under the auspices of Mr. Nathaniel Holmes, of Winchester-buildings, and the Transatlantic line will be promoted by the same gentleman. It is understood that, upon its completion, it, as well as the cable across the Pentland Firth, will be taken over and managed by the Post Office.

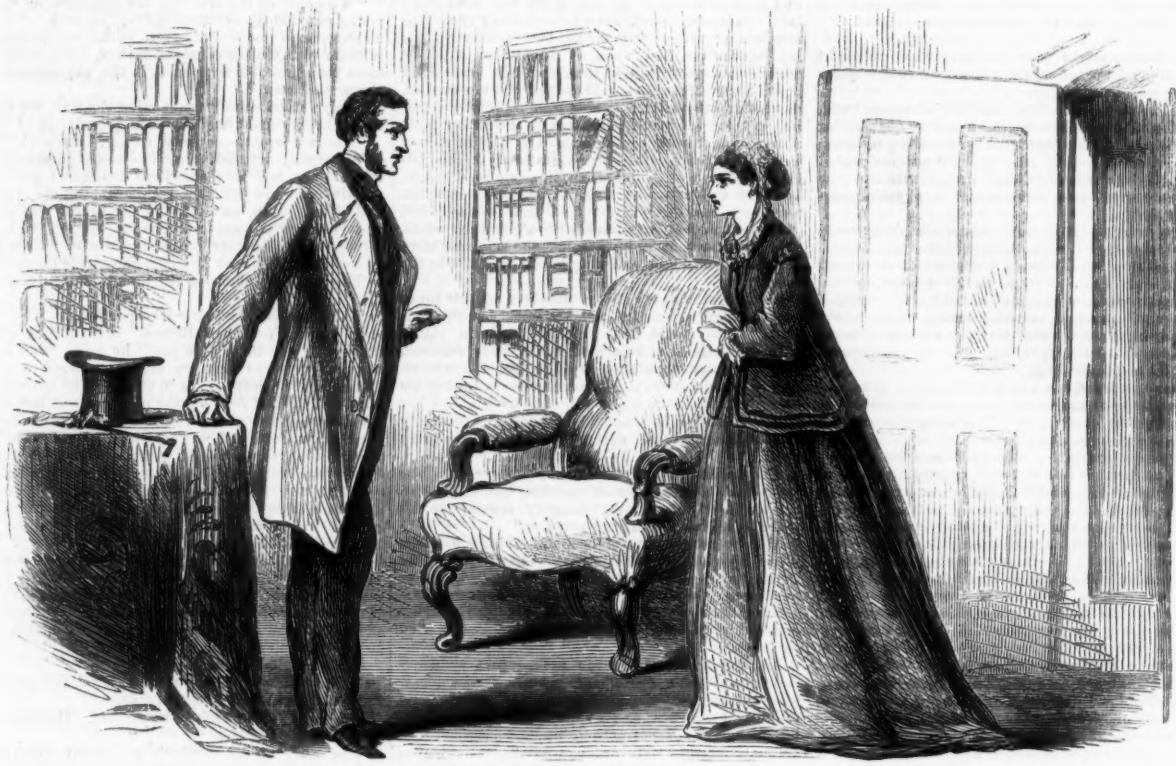
CHEMISTRY OF THE SHADDOCK-TREE.

The well-known Dutch chemist, Dr. J. E. de Vrij, who has distinguished himself by several interesting researches in organic chemistry, and has done much to promote the useful applications of this science both at home and in the Dutch colonies, turned his attention recently to the chemistry of the shaddock-tree (*Citrus decumana*), which, after his last visit to Java, he found growing by thousands in Bandoung. In many higher localities, like Bandoung, where the average temperature is much lower than in Batavia, the fruit of the shaddock is only the size of an ordinary orange, and is not eatable.

As the many thousand shaddock-trees growing in the neighbourhood of Bandoung were therefore almost useless, he thought it would be interesting to make some experiments on the preparation of the essence of shaddock-flowers. After a great many distillations of several hundredweights of fresh flowers, the result was that the average quantity of essential oil yielded by 100 lb. weight of fresh flowers amounted to 1 lb. Dr. de Vrij then found that this essence, obtained by distilling the petals of the shaddock-flowers, is identical with the essence of orange-flowers, called *néroli*. This conclusion was amply confirmed, when he returned to Europe, by the principal manufacturers of perfumes whom he consulted on this subject, and who declared the essence of shaddock-flowers prepared by him to be identical with the first-rate quality of *néroli*.

The next question to be solved was whether the manufacture of *néroli* on a large scale in the tropics would be profitable, and he was soon convinced that in Java, where he made his experiments, the local circumstances are such that this manufacture would certainly prove advantageous. Hence it is almost as certain that it could be profitably undertaken in the English colonies where shaddock-trees abound. But besides the essence obtained by distillation of the flowers, there remains in the retort a substance which deserves attention, both from a scientific and a practical point of view, especially if Dr. de Vrij's plan of preparing *néroli* on a large scale in the tropical colonies should be carried out. If the residue in the still is thrown, while yet boiling, upon a cloth, the clear yellowish liquid which passes through deposits, in the course of a few days, a large amount of yellow crystals. These, on being submitted to various experiments, have turned out to be identical with the substance discovered in 1828, by Lebreton, in unripe bitter oranges, and called by him *hesperidine*, the composition of which remains yet unknown. This *hesperidine*, which de Vrij has found to be very widely spread in the genus *Citrus*, is the pure bitter substance contained also in oranges and lemons. It can be obtained easily, and in tolerably large quantities, from shaddock-flowers, and appears to be a completely innocent bitter substance, very different from *cocculin indicus*, *picric acid*, &c., so that it deserves, perhaps, some attention as a substitute for hops. In these days, when organic chemistry progresses with such rapid strides, it is not impossible that the substance in question may have been already produced artificially; but this, of course, cannot be ascertained with certainty until its properties and composition shall have been more completely studied.

VALUABLE APPLICATION OF HEATED AIR.—A very great improvement in the steam-engine, amounting to a substantial discovery and invention, has just been patented by Mr. Warsop, of Nottingham. The improvement consists in forcing heated air into the boiler of the engines now in use—the air and steam together passing from the boiler to work the engine. The inventor has a separate apparatus for pumping and drawing the cold air through a coil of pipes, and so heating it before it enters the boiler, but the cold air may also be taken directly into the boiler and be made to take up its heat entirely from the water in it. The advantages offered by the invention are stated to be threefold: "First and foremost, a saving of more than forty per cent. in fuel; secondly, an increased amount of motive power compared with the ordinary steam-engine; and thirdly, a diminished supply of water for boilers." A further advantage is also said to deserve attention, viz., that the action of the air on the water is very beneficial, keeping it in a constant perturbation, thus tending to prevent slating. If these results should be confirmed by further trials, the importance of the invention will soon be felt, not the smallest advantage being the increased length of the voyages it will enable steamers to make without recoaling.



EVELYN'S PLOT.

CHAPTER IX.

"Speak! What can you say?"
"Nothing. I cannot heave my heart into my mouth."
"How now! Mend your speech, or it may mar your fortunes."
Shakespeare.

EVELYN'S feelings were mingled enough with love for both the persons engaged in the late mysterious outrage; and with a self-reproach that she dared not—could not—acquit the one who had the chief claim on her favourable judgment, her charity, her support, and defence.

Evelyn would willingly have laid down her life for Cecil, but she knew—she felt—an instinctive certainty that to acquit him was impossible, even from her trusting affection.

Had she known what was passing in a room only a few yards from that in which she was sitting, her fears and distress would have been yet more unanswerable than at present.

Arthur had gone late to bed, after a last glance in his cousin's chamber, and, in spite of his anxiety and real sorrow, slept heavily for some few hours, and in fact, the servant who came to rouse him had some difficulty in waking his young master when he entered his room about ten o'clock with that object.

Perhaps he might even have given up the task, and permitted the exhausted Arthur to finish his sleep in peace, had not his errand been one that brooked no delay.

"If you please, Mr. Arthur, there is a superintendent of police waiting for you. At least, I fancy he is something grander still than the one that came last night, for he is dressed in plain clothes, and seems almost like a gentleman."

The young man sprang from the bed, and began to put on some clothes with a speed perfectly astonishing to his servant.

"Tell him that I will be with him in a few minutes," he said. "Show him in the library, and bid him wait there till I come. Don't let anyone see him."

The man retired, full of the excitement and importance that every fresh step in a matter of such mystery casts over a household.

In less than a quarter-of-an-hour Arthur entered the room where his visitor was awaiting him.

There was justice in the domestic's remark as to the station of the visitor, for his whole appearance and manner were singularly correct and courteous, and even dignified for his position.

[FRANK TEMPLI'S CLIENT.]

"Mr. Arthur Danvers, I believe?"

"I am Arthur Danvers."

"I have a very unpleasant errand to perform—that is, unpleasant since it will, I fear, bring some annoyance on a young lady who is by birth and education entirely removed from such distressing positions as that in which she is now placed."

Arthur flushed crimson.

"Explain yourself, sir."

"I will do so immediately. You are, of course, aware that a person was traced to your house last night—indeed, it was all but certain that the individual in question was admitted to the apartments of your cousin, Miss Rivers. I understand from my subordinate that she at that time denied—or rather, refused to answer any questions as to the occurrence; and it was left in abeyance for the moment, on your undertaking to be surety for her after appearance."

Arthur bowed.

"Well, sir, it may be perhaps very painful, although hardly surprising, to you, that there have been fresh discoveries that tend to connect the circumstance yet more plainly with Miss Rivers."

Again Arthur bowed, but with a half-indignant, half-terrified expression of countenance.

"Go on, if you please. I can give no opinion till I hear what you have to say."

"Quite right, sir. Far better if everyone acted on that principle. But I will soon make it all plain enough to you. First, I would recall to your mind that the individual in question was seen, up to almost the time when he disappeared in your house; and next, that he was absolutely detected in his too successful effort to leave it. But, of course, we did not determine his identity; nor, indeed, can we be absolutely certain of it now, though we fear that Miss Rivers can give but too clear an explanation of the mystery. May I request to see her at once?"

Arthur hesitated.

"Miss Rivers is extremely exhausted, and I fear not at all in a state to see anyone, much less on such painful business. As her guardian for the time, I must decline such an interview for her at present."

"I am grieved, very grieved, to press such a request, but it is my duty. In plain English, I must see her, and at once."

Arthur still remained motionless.

"I must really beg for your interference in the affair," continued the man, with a slight tint of impatience. "No one is more reluctant to be importunate or peremptory than I am; but where crime and violence is concerned, we must sacrifice personal consideration."

"Can you give me any idea of the nature of the facts recently discovered?" asked the young man. "I have no wish to stand between anyone and the vindication of justice, especially when my own cousin's life is at stake; but it is so peculiar, so—so—"

"Painful a case, sir. I grant it, and I fear that the more it is looked into, the more painful it will prove. As to your request, it is contrary to our rules to do anything that can prepare a witness for examination; but still, I know you are a man of honour, and I will at least show you sir that I am not acting without reason."

He drew a ring from his pocket and handed it to Arthur.

"Do you know this ring, sir?"

Arthur turned pale.

"It is one which is of considerable value, I believe, and peculiar in the setting. Scarcely likely to be imitated or forgotten. May I ask whether you can identify it—or this?"

And he handed Arthur a small net purse, with a few gold pieces shining through the web.

"I do not wish you to commit yourself, sir, but still, I feel certain, from your manner, that you have some knowledge of the articles in question, and that you will now understand why I wish to see your cousin on the subject."

Arthur had now considered his conduct.

He had scarcely for an instant doubted the identity of the ring, for it was one that had been presented to Evelyn on her seventeenth birthday by his uncle and Oliver, together with a valuable brooch, of the same precious stone and similar setting.

But the purse put the matter beyond doubt, since it had Evelyn's initials wrought into the meshes with gold beads.

A short, brief struggle, a paroxysm of mingled jealousy and fear for her and for the guilty one, a sensation of choking dryness in the throat, and then he determined, come what might, to tell the truth. He knew well that Evelyn would not deny the truth, even if it cost her life itself. And he fancied that he might even do her service by admitting what she might otherwise simply refuse to answer.

"Yes," he said, "yes, I do know the ring. It is one that cannot be mistaken."

Then breathing more freely, and trying to look as if he had nothing to fear from the terrible questioning, he went on more boldly.

"Yes, it belongs to Miss Rivers. It was a gift to her on her birthday."

"A ring, therefore, that the young lady would not, in any ordinary circumstances, have been inclined to part with?"

Arthur saw what he had done. He had made the task more difficult for Evelyn, and strengthened the suspicions, or rather the certainty of the inspector.

"I should think not," he said, faltering.

"Oh, that he might warn Evelyn. That he might prepare her for what would be the inevitable questioning that awaited her.

Yet to what avail. She could not but speak truth, if she spoke at all. And Arthur began to quail under the prospect of what that truth would bring to light; yet the truth must be told. It could not be doubted that Evelyn would never have parted with the ring and purse save under some moral or physical compulsion.

There was but one person—whose complicity could not cast a slur on Evelyn, herself, in the transaction. Yet, if it was Cecil, what a complication of misery for her, and for all. And as he felt the eyes of the examiner resting on him, and watching the changes of his countenance as he sat, marking these doubts and fears in his mind, the darkness and the distress grew deeper and deeper, but still his presence of mind did not desert him.

"I may, at least, ask whether the person is in custody, and where you found those articles which you connect, justly enough, with Miss Rivers," he asked.

The superintendent smiled.

"It is our province to ask, not to answer questions," he said. "I do not wish, in any way, to entangle you or Miss Rivers by any cross-examination or deception. But the questions I put, and wish to put, are very simple, and the truth cannot be affected, or ought not to be affected by anything that I can tell you on that head. It is enough that they have been found, and that there is no doubt that they were taken from the apartments of Miss Rivers, either with or without her connivance, the night before last. But it is absolutely necessary that I should see her, and hear her story, so far as the unhappy affair is connected with herself, that we may keep her name as far as possible from appearing in the public prints, or exposing her to yet more painful measures on the part of the officers of justice.

Arthur saw that the *matter* could no longer be evaded, and he at once rose to leave the room.

"I will go to Miss Rivers, and endeavour to arrange for an interview as soon as she is equal to it; but I really cannot consent that her health should be endangered more than it has been at present. And it may be an hour or two before I should think it safe to disturb her."

The man bowed.

"I will give you an hour willingly, but allow me to say that the delay is only increasing the evil. It is possible that when I see the young lady I may be able to clear up the matter, and not expose her to any further annoyances for the present. But, till then, I confess my suspicions are only gaining very uncomfortable strength, and I shall be driven to take measures that would be as painful to me as to yourself."

And the superintendent's countenance fully confirmed his words.

Arthur left the room and slowly and gravely ascended the stairs to the apartments where he expected to find Evelyn; but in vain. His first impression was that the girl had actually left the house during the night, for the doors were ajar, and he could perceive that the bed had not been slept in, and that the whole room was in the same state as it must have been arranged on the previous night. Then a suspicion of the truth flashed upon him, and he hurried silently and quickly to Oliver's room. There was a sound of voices as he came near, and he could distinguish Evelyn's soft, soothing tones, evidently attempting to calm and quiet the invalid.

"It will be all well—it is all safe, dear Oliver; only be quiet and calm, and all will be well."

"But Cecil; is he—tell me truly, Evelyn—is he safe?"

"I trust so—I believe so," was the earnest reply. "For his sake—for all our sakes—dear Oliver, try to get strong and well, and then you can do more than any of us for Cecil."

Arthur's heart sank at the silvery, tender tones in which Evelyn addressed his cousin. He felt that he could hardly be mistaken that, even unconsciously to herself, Evelyn had learnt to look on Oliver with different feelings to those of a sister or cousin, and that from that day she was lost to himself in any other relation. It was a sharp pang. And it was a chance—a doubt, how it might work in after and calmer hours.

Happily for himself and for others Arthur's mind was too entirely engrossed with the urgent and inevitable claims that were pressing on his thoughts for him to have leisure to pause and weigh the entanglements and the perplexities that might be preparing for the relatives on whom more than one heavy blow had been already dealt, and to whom he owed so much.

He softly opened the door of the invalid's chamber and for the moment the evil spirit was completely laid. It would indeed have been difficult to cherish any feeling of jealousy of that pale sufferer, as he lay motionless and weak as a child on a pillow that was scarcely whiter than the face that rested on it. The extreme loss of blood had given a washed, death-like hue to the skin that was especially startling in the well marked features of the strong man. A woman is scarcely much changed by illness. A long and gradual fading away steals gradually on the feeling and the eyes. But when, in a few brief hours, a strong and vigorous man is reduced to infantile weakness, and the manly hue and bronzed and vigorous complexion is blanched to a bloodless white, then the shock is more painful, the contrast more strikingly vivid and alarming to the eyes and to the heart.

Arthur's step was still and noiseless, and his tones tremulous with emotion as he advanced to the bedside. Yet he would have willingly changed places with the sufferer at that moment to have received Evelyn's gentle tending; to have had the unconsciously tender looks in her large soft eyes bent on his face; to have heard the sweet, anxious tones of her voice addressing him, and to have felt the certainty of the interest thus evinced in the young girl's heart.

"Well, Oliver, dear old fellow, how are you?" he said, with an affectionate of cheerful carelessness in his tone. "Why, Eva, naughty cousin, up all night I see, in spite of your promise."

And he bent over the bed, and laid his hand on the fingers that lay pale and feeble outside the coverlet, and pressed them with a loving, fraternal clasp, that brought a faint smile to the invalid's features.

"A sad lowering of pride this, Arthur," he murmured, "but I shall soon be better, with such kind nursing."

A warning "hush" made Arthur turn suddenly round, and he saw the ominous face of the doctor who had accompanied Oliver home on the fatal night, and who was now evidently anxious to keep his hold on the casual patient he had gained. And for once, Arthur felt relieved at the interruption from the rather fussy Esculapius, whom he had but the day before condemned as the very embodiment of impudent officiousness and practice-hunting. He could now draw Evelyn from the room for a few minutes without exciting the surprise or fears of the patient, and as the nurse took the same excellent opportunity of showing her "diminished head" in her charge's room, the "fitting in" of small circumstances was thus made complete.

"Evelyn, dear cousin, I fear you must endure another short interview with these importunate officials," he said; "but I think it will be a very brief one. You have only to reply truly to a very few questions, and it will be over. And if Oliver gets well, he will soon put the matter beyond further annoyance."

"If; oh, Arthur!"

"Well, I will say 'when.' There is hope enough now, I doubt not. But Evelyn dear, I want to get this man out of the house, and then we will have some breakfast, and a little quiet talk over all these bewildering events."

Evelyn calmly complied; her mind was fully made up, and she knew that it was of no avail to defer the trial, and might probably but injure the cousin she would have died to save.

The brief addition to her night toilette was soon made; the white wrapper hastily changed for a morning dress, and the hair carelessly twisted in the large coils that its abundance made so easy and so massively rich, and then she quietly and hesitatingly joined Arthur, who was waiting for her at the library door.

The superintendent rose and bowed with profound respect to the fair girl, so unlike those with whom his avocation usually brought him in contact.

"I will be as little troublesome as I can in my questions, Miss Rivers. May I ask whether your cousin has informed you of the nature of my errand this morning?"

"Certainly not," she replied, firmly.

"So much the better. I can more safely trust to the frank replies you kindly give to the very few questions I will ask. First—do you know this ring and purse?"

"Certainly, they are mine," she said, her face blanching at the idea that Cecil must have been seized for the baubles to have come in the possession of the police.

"And, have you missed them; or, in plain words, were they stolen from you?"

"Certainly not."

"Then how came they in the possession of any one else?" asked the official, sharply.

"I gave them voluntarily, as a free and unsolicited gift," she replied calmly. "And if they have been stolen it is not from me that the thief has been made."

The official smiled slightly.

"We know all the arts that are practised on such young and gently-nurtured ladies," he said. "It is no uncommon practice to extort oaths and promises in order to baffle the cause of justice, and I think it more than probable that such is the explanation in the present case."

Evelyn stood calmly confronting the man, her eyes unflinchingly enduring the sharp questioning of his.

"You are wrong—entirely wrong," she said. "I have already refused to answer some questions on this subject, and to that refusal I adhere; but I as positively assure you that I am speaking the simple and literal truth, and that no constraint whatever was practised on me, to induce me to give the baubles you have in your possession, nor to induce me to conceal the manner in which they were obtained."

There was no doubt in the proud, truthful answer of the girl.

The superintendent bowed respectfully.

"I believe you, Miss Rivers. Indeed, it is quite impossible not to believe you," he said; "but still, the circumstances are very slightly altered by your statement. It only serves to connect the individual who was traced here on the night before last with the person whom we have been led to believe entered your apartments, and was afterwards watched in his escape from the house at the very time when Mr. Oliver was brought home. But—will you pardon me—young lady, if I venture to urge you, for your own sake as well as that of justice, to give up the name of this individual. You are too young and too attractive not to be exposed to evil comments if the tale gets public. Permit me—as a man who has seen enough of these matters to weary him with his calling—permit me to entreat you, young lady, to give up this overstrained delicacy towards this unworthy individual, and let justice take her course. It is due to everyone that you should—indeed, it is!"

Evelyn's eyes filled.

There was something almost paternal, and yet perfectly respectful in the man's manner.

The whole truth flashed before her. Her own reputation was at stake.

The story of her mother's sin might well give point and sharpness to evil tongues.

And even when time might reveal the truth—when Cecil's absence might give a clue to the mystery—even then it would be easy for the envious and the uncharitable still to believe the tale of suspicion and disgrace that could so surely be told.

Evelyn saw it all. And the crimson blood flamed up in her cheeks at the thought that scandal could thus be busy with her name. Still she did not hesitate. Her duty appeared clear, and at any risk to herself of hardships, or of disgrace, she would perform it.

"I thank you from my heart," she said, holding out her hand to the official with a smile that brought moisture to his eyes, it was so sad and yet so sweet. "I thank you; but it cannot be. I pledge you my word that the ring and the purse you have there were given freely by me to a friend, and must have been lost or stolen from that friend for them to come in your possession. But who that friend was, and under what circumstances I gave them, I decline absolutely to state, at any risk whatever. Is that all you have to say to me?"

The man looked pained—yes, actually pained rather than angry, or even suspicious at the girl's determination.

"It is a sad business," he said; "a sad business, and I do not think we have come to the bottom of it yet. Still, I will do my best for you, young lady, though, like yourself, I must do my duty in face of everything. I won't detain you longer than to take your own and your cousin's recognisances not to be out of the way till the matter is sifted and brought under the notice of the magistrates."

The form was soon gone through, and then once more the house was left to the tenantry of its rightful owners.

CHAPTER X.

Low on her knees herself she cast
Before our Lady; murmured she,
Complaining: "Mother give me grace
To help me of my weary load."
And in the liquid mirror glowed
The clear perfections of her face.

Tennyson.

"If you please, Miss Evelyn, Dr. Barber has sent another nurse. Will you see her? She is in the housekeeper's room."

The girl had been taking a brief repose in the afternoon of the next day to that which we have already described, when Lizzie made the announcement.

"Certainly, Lizzie. Bring her to my sitting-room and I will speak to her, though I do not doubt she is quite proper for the situation as the doctor has sent her."

"Well, Miss Evelyn, she does look very different from what the other woman was, but to my idea she is almost too delicate-looking for the place—and as for her being cheerful in a sick room, as people say one ought to be, it's out of the question, I'm sure. She looks as if she couldn't smile for her very life."

"Never mind, Lizzie," said the young lady, faintly smiling herself at the girl's innate horror of gloom. "Let me see her. If she is attentive and kind we can dispense with the smiles."

And the girl left the room to obey the mandate, without presuming on another word.

It was certainly one of Evelyn's gifts to command perfect respect and obedience, while yet showing the utmost indulgence and kindness to her dependents; and Lizzie, indulged as she was by her young lady, never presumed for a moment to contest her will, even by a look.

In a few moments she returned with the candidate for the position forfeited by the somnolent nurse. Evelyn could not but confess that the woman deserved, in some degree, the comments of the attendant.

Never had she seen a more fixed melancholy on any human face than in those delicate features. For "delicate" they were, and in spite of the humble station and plain morning attire, there was a strange air of refinement about the woman that Evelyn recognised at a glance. No trace of humble or vulgar birth and training was in the chiselling of the thin nose, the pale lips, or the large, sad eyes. Even the skin looked fine and soft, in spite of the traces of small pox that marred the even smoothness of the face, and doubtless injured what had once been a clear and fine complexion. The figure was tall and slim, but was bent by a slight stoop that might be from illness or from trouble, but certainly not from age, for the woman could positively not be more than forty or forty-five, and the dark hair was soft and glossy, as Evelyn's own.

But the most remarkable feature in the face was the extreme sadness that it expressed. Such a calm hopelessness, such a deep, fixed pensiveness, or rather melancholy, that she could scarcely have imagined in any human countenance.

Evelyn had seen sharp trouble in the working features of some, she had witnessed tears and passionate sobs and complaints in others, but not such despairing resignation, such utter abandonment to love, as in that singular face. No wonder that Lizzie had said she was sure the new nurse could not smile for her life.

Evelyn fancied that she trembled when she came into the room, and that the hand was half-extended, and then clasped back in strong, firm grasp of her cloak which wrapped her form. But it might be fancy, for the next minute all such slight movements, if they had existed, had ceased; and the woman stood still and waited in respectful silence until Evelyn spoke.

"Pray sit down," the girl said, gently. "You look weary. Have you walked far?"

"Not far," was the reply, in a voice that was tremulous and low, but certainly with no lack of refined accent in the tones.

"I fear you are not well. You are scarcely strong enough to undertake such arduous duties," said Evelyn, kindly. "Let me order you some wine?"

And she laid her hand on the bell.

"No, my lady, no," said the woman, more firmly. "I am really quite well, I can assure you. I will do my duty, and you shall have no cause to complain of my efforts at any rate, to please you, if you will allow me to try."

"Have you been accustomed to nursing sick people?" asked Evelyn, struck with the eager, restless look, and the phraseology of the sentence, "I will try."

"Dr. Barber has attended those whom I have nursed," was the answer, pronounced in almost haughty tones. "And he was satisfied."

"I do not doubt it," said the girl, gently. "I do not doubt it; only it is a very, very valuable life, and was nearly sacrificed to—"

"To what?—to whom?" asked the woman, quickly.

Evelyn looked astonished. The woman was so strange, and yet, in spite of her strangeness, so free from any impertinence that she was perplexed, and yet not offended by the questioning.

"To the folly of some, the negligence of others," she said, with a calm dignity that repressed, and yet did not wound the eager warmth of the stranger.

The woman took the hint, and stood, with her hands crossed, in humble submission.

"You shall, at least, not complain of negligence," she said; "and for folly—ah, it is too late—too late for that now, and too late to repent of what has been. Alas, alas!"

The last words were rather murmured to herself

than to the young girl, and Evelyn's instinctive delicacy prevented her appearing to notice them.

There was a pause for a few moments.

"You will allow me to try," the woman resumed, eagerly.

"I will, indeed I will," she said, gently. "I am sure you will at least do your duty to the best of your ability; and you cannot help being interested in your patient."

The woman started.

"Why?" she said; "why? What makes you think so?"

"Because," said the girl, astonished at her vehemence, "because I think you seem able to understand what is good and noble, and Mr. Danvers possesses all that ought to win anyone's esteem in his character."

The sad look deepened.

"Perhaps you are right, young lady," she said; "at least, I can see—I can see. Better if I had done so."

Then, with a sudden relapse into the still, calm sadness that seemed her usual expression, she said, quietly:

"I am very impertinent, I fear, Miss Rivers, daring to speak of myself, but it is through your goodness that I have been so tempted. It is past now, I shall not offend again."

And with the simple demeanour of a hired menial she waited the signal of the young lady to conduct her to the sick room. Evelyn was puzzled and yet interested in her strange visitant. With girlish romance she was ready to attribute all kinds of romantic antecedents to the hired nurse, and inwardly resolved to try, ere she left them, to obtain from her and sympathise with, the tale of her sorrows. She was certain, quite certain, that hers was neither a common nor a guilty story. She would try to repay her her goodness to Oliver, if she did indeed do her duty, of endeavouring to aid and comfort her in her trials and sorrows. All this passed through her mind in the brief moments that intervened ere she gathered sufficient self-possession to prepare to lead the way to the sick room.

The nurse waited patiently for the girl's waking from her reverie, and her eyes wandered round the room in a listless, yet furtive gaze, as if taking a note of each trifle that the pretty apartment contained.

It was a peculiar look; a look of half recognition, and equally of weariness, which such inanimate objects could scarcely have been supposed to excite.

Evelyn did not appear to notice it, or if she did, it was with the pre-occupied glance of one whose mind is fully engrossed, and who does not at the instant remark the incidents which yet may dwell in the brain and give cause for future perplexity and meditation.

At last she seemed to wake up, and prepared to lead the way to the invalid's room.

"But you must have some refreshment first," she said; "and go to your room. It is near to Mr. Oliver's, and you will have every convenience, as far as can be arranged in your department. And—aid I shall always be ready to relieve you when you are too fatigued."

The woman courtesied respectfully. Yet there was rather the air of a lady acknowledging a courtesy than a dependent thanking a superior for a favour in the inclination of the tall form.

Evelyn opened the door and led the way along the corridor, and down the steps that corresponded with the opposite short flight that led to Oliver's room.

The nurse followed unhesitatingly. Indeed, she seemed as if she could almost have led the way herself so completely did she accompany rather than blindly follow the steps of her fair young guide.

And what was yet more remarkable she actually seemed to pause before the right door, even before Evelyn herself had fully indicated that it was the apartment to which they were destined. Evelyn did not remark it then, save with a half smile that appeared to say it was a strange and amusing coincidence that had made her choose the sick man's chamber.

Then she opened the door, and the woman with a lingering look around entered.

The invalid was perhaps even more helplessly and hopelessly ill than on the previous day. The first delirious excitement had passed, and the exquisite feeling of relief, of freedom from comparatively severe pain, and waking to consciousness and to the delight of being attended by Evelyn, was over. But the pain of the fractured leg, and all but distress of extreme weakness still existed in unabated force, with occasional access of feverish symptoms and restlessness that were distressing to the invalid, and rendered extreme care and gentleness needful in those around him.

And Evelyn glanced anxiously at the face of the stranger woman to ascertain, if possible, the impression that she received from the first sight of the patient.

But her eyes were wandering listlessly and eagerly around the room, with the same inexpressibly sorrowful gaze that had been in them when she had made the same review of Evelyn's apartment.

Was she contrasting their elegance with her own? Had she remembered anything like such comforts and luxuries in her own home?

Such must surely be the interpretation that those looks conveyed, and Evelyn was even more interested in the singular woman from her evident dissimilarity to her class and station. But the expression passed almost momentarily, and then she approached the bed, and gazed at the patient with a kindly, sad pity in her look.

Evelyn watched her in silence as she gazed at the closed lids and the pale face, which was now even more corpse-like from the utter repose of a temporary sleep.

"Is he very ill do you think?" she whispered.

Evelyn's eyes filled with tears.

"I fear so," said she; "but they say all depends on care and nursing."

"Which he shall have, please heaven; such as if as his mother had lived to tend him," the woman said, in a low tone.

And then moving noiselessly from the bed she began to occupy herself in the duties of a sick room with a ready activity and delicacy of touch and movement that were actual perfection in a nurse. Evelyn was satisfied.

"I will leave you now," she whispered. "When he is most likely to awake just ring for me and I will come to tell him who you are. But it may be long before that, for he is now under the influence of an opiate."

And the girl softly glided from the room. The door closed behind her. The footsteps ceased, and then, and not till then, the stranger cast herself on her knees by the bed, and burst into an agony of silent tears. There were no sobs, no hysterical vehemence, no appeal to pity and alarm by the force and violence of the passion that shook her. But the tears poured down in such utter self-abandonment to grief, such hopeless self-pity, that it was more touching and more indicative of grief and despair than the most extreme hysterical violence could have been.

"Oh, why, why did I do it?" she murmured. Why did I do it? Oh, if I could have known all—If I could but have seen with the eyes that I see with now—if I could but have been wise in time But now it is too late—too late!"

And the low, winning accents, soft as the morning wind, ceased, and she buried her head and strove to hush the passion of tears ere anyone could detect her in its indulgence. She was so inured to sorrow was that woman, or she could not have so quickly stilled the rain-drops that poured down her pale cheeks. She seemed used to weeping, for the stains of the tears seemed to dry up like water on an arid soil that was drunk up by the fever of the sorrow that prayed on her very blood. And in a few more minutes she had risen from her knees, and with the same calm but hopeless despair that had characterised her in Evelyn's presence, she quickly assumed her post by the sick bed and waited the awaking of the invalid.

Her eyes rested on his face with a yearning look of kindly, tender sympathy.

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" she muttered; "yet better to suffer for others than oneself; and she—oh, my heart, my heart! will it never still?"

And she pressed her hands earnestly against the side where the poor throbbing heart actually raised the black folds of the dress that covered the throbbing bosom.

Ah, poor heart, poor heart, little did it need to make it break. But that little has not come yet.

The end was not yet.

She must suffer more, repent more, and see more of the consequence of the past ere she was to be released from the burden that weighed on it, as if oppressing breath itself by its leaden pressure. It was, perhaps, some half hour or more ere the sufferer began to move restlessly, and showed signs of awaking.

But the nurse did not obey the directions of the young lady in such a juncture.

For instead of ringing the bell she only placed herself rather nearer to the bed, and stood gazing eagerly and attentively at the movements of the patient. At last the eyes opened fully.

"Who are you?" he said, faintly, as his eyes rested with a startled gaze on the stranger.

"I am the nurse, sir, sent by Doctor Barber. Please not to exert yourself, sir. Miss Rivers will return soon."

The voice and manner had something of constraint in them very different from her manner to Evelyn. It seemed as if she was striving to assume a manner suitable to her station while addressing the invalid.

Then she noiselessly adjusted the pillows with a delicate, light touch, that was the very perfection of invalid nursing.

No wearying by questions. No rough or sudden movements. All soft, and quiet, and unfatiguing motions, that seemed instinctively to guess the wishes and the wants of the invalid.

How different to the self-indulgent, somnolent hireling who had lately left the house; and yet poor unfortunate, perhaps her sympathies had been fairly worn out by the long, weary tending on the sick, and the irritable, and the ungrateful among her charges.

Oliver was thankfully susceptible of the change. And he appeared to have a dim inkling of the same idea that had possessed Evelyn, viz., that the new nurse was scarcely to be classed with the usual genus to which she belonged by profession.

The very delicacy of the white thin hands, the softness of the touch, the refinement of the whole ideas of what would be acceptable and grateful to the patient, were alone sufficient to distinguish her from the Mrs. Camps of the world.

When her duties were performed she sat down once more, within sight of the patient, but without the slightest attempt to begin any kind of dialogue with him. Indeed, the calm, stolid look in her face almost repelled the least advance to any conversation on his part, had he wished for it.

At last he asked in his feeble invalid tones:

"Where is Evelyn—Miss Rivers, I mean?"

"She will be here very soon. Shall I ring for her?" she asked, meekly.

"No, no, poor girl, she has had fatigue enough. Let her have some rest," he said.

But the longing in the eyes was unmistakable to the nurse's keen glance, and the scornful look came over her face with even deeper intensity.

"You wish for her," she said; "I am sure she would wish me to send for her."

"Oh, no," he said, "it is not that—it is not that; but—I thought perhaps something might have happened to oblige her to go away; and it is that which troubled me."

The woman looked inquiringly at him.

"All has been quiet for the last two hours," she said. "I have been in the house longer than that, and I have not heard a sound. But, you are in pain, sir, are you not?" she added, seeing the painful contraction of his features.

"Oh, only a little in the leg; I must be well soon very soon," he added, musingly, "if only for him poor fellow!"

The nurse was silent, but her sad eyes questioned mutely whether it was true that the pain was physical.

"If you are not afraid for me to leave you for a few moments I will go and call Miss Rivers, if she is not engaged," she resumed. "I will be very cautious not to disturb her."

"But you will not know the way; you have only been here so short a time?" he said, with a look of surprise, that brought the faint, faded colour in the pallid cheeks.

"Oh, yes, I—that is I came from Miss Rivers's apartment. I shall remember it," she said, hesitatingly, "but I daresay she will not be long before she comes, in any case."

And she resumed her seat with the air of a person who has been detected in a mistake and is determined not to be guilty of it again.

There was silence for a few minutes, then the door opened gently. The invalid's eyes turned eagerly towards that direction; but it was Arthur and not Evelyn who entered. Again the woman's face changed. A sharp, unquiet glance came over her features till the young man had advanced to the bedside, and she heard Oliver address him by name.

"Arthur, my dear fellow, what news?"

"Nothing, nothing, Oliver. All is safe at present, at least safe in my idea, and yours also. He has not been heard of."

"Thank heaven!" gasped the invalid, fervently.

Was it fancy? Or did a faint gasp come from the spot where the nurse sat, with her hands folded meekly on her lap. The cousins both fancied that a slight sound did re-echo their involuntary sigh of thankfulness, but it must have been only the accidental breeze that came gently through the open window; for the woman's face was calm and immovable as if no passion of sorrow or of hope could agitate her more.

"But Evelyn—does she, is she in any danger?" again asked the invalid. "She would never confess it to me, but I fear, I fear for her, Arthur."

"None, if you get well, to explain and to manage all for her," said Arthur, cheerily; "and for that end

I must not answer any more questions—must I, nurse?"

The woman bowed silently. She seemed turned into an automaton now that a third person was in the question.

Arthur turned again to his cousin.

"Your father is evidently missing you, Oliver. It is at least, one sign that some consciousness and power of recognition remains."

(To be continued.)

JULIET'S COURAGE.

THE level sunset light was turning all the little tools along the shingly beach into drops of gold. Far off, against the horizon, the great sea seemed to melt imperceptibly into liquid western fire; while here and there a white sail gleamed up—man's mark written on the pages of the deep.

"Yes, it's very nice," said little Mrs. Elton, plaintively, as she sat, swinging a gipsy hat by its broad white ribbons, "but I should have preferred some inland place for the summer. You see, I am never at ease about the children, and Mr. Elton comes down only once a week."

"Your brother seems to enjoy the beauties of the sea-shore very much," said Mrs. Dorsey, rather roguishly. "I think I never saw Mr. Seville in better spirits."

"Oh, that's because Miss Chaloner is here," said the small matron, curving her lip a little superciliously. "He is so absurdly infatuated about Juliet Chaloner!"

"I think she is a very lovely girl," said Mrs. Dorsey, quietly, wondering within herself why it was that sisters were never willing to acknowledge the merits of their brothers' *fiancées*.

"Lovely? Oh, yes, I suppose she is lovely enough; only I never did fancy that blue-eyed, flaxen-haired style of beauty."

"Mr. Seville does, it seems."

"My dear, didn't I tell you that Clarence was completely infatuated? I don't suppose he would be willing to own that she has a fault in the world! I did talk to him seriously, at one time, about those coquettish little airs and graces of hers, but I saw at once that I might as well have talked to the wind. You see, I think she is disposed to be selfish—these only daughters often are; and then she is such an egregious coward!"

"What do you mean?" questioned Mrs. Dorsey, rather amused.

"She won't go out on horseback, because she is so afraid of being thrown; she won't ride, lest she should be run away with; she is terrified out of her senses at the apparition of a mouse; and I wish you could have heard her scream, the other day, when a spider dropped on her bonnet. I've no patience with such a miserably balanced character."

Mrs. Dorsey smiled.

"Perhaps it is only a bit of girlish affectation."

"No, it is not; she actually is afraid. Goodness knows how Clarence will ever go through life with such a silly little coward as Juliet Chaloner. I take every opportunity of showing my disapproval of the engagement, but of course my thoughts and feelings go for nothing."

"There she comes now, with your children clinging round her," said Mrs. Dorsey, glancing down the path that led to the sea-beach. "They certainly appear to be very fond of her."

"Yes," returned Mrs. Elton, indifferently, "she has a way of winning children's affection, I believe."

As Juliet Chaloner came up the broad path, her slight figure darkly outlined against the fiery gold of the sunset, her beauty seemed something ethereal, intangible, to Mrs. Dorsey. She was slight and small, with transparent white robes floating round her, and long, loose curls of pallid gold, while the faint tinge of rose in her perfectly rounded cheeks, and the scarlet ripeness of her lips, supplied the deficiency of colouring that would otherwise have been perceptible. But the eyes were perhaps the most noticeable feature of her beauty. Large and blue, with a sort of inward light sparkling through their irises, that melted sometimes into velvety blackness, there was an expression in them that was too subtle and charming for description. You felt it, yet you could not define its enchantment.

One little one clung to her skirts, another held her hand, and two or three skipped along in front of her as she neared the piazza. Yes, Juliet had the gift of charming children in a rare degree, and Mrs. Elton's small offspring considered Miss Chaloner little short of the white-winged perfections that they read about!

"Mamma! mamma!" piped out little Hubert, a chubby-cheeked rogue of nine summers, "Miss Chaloner has promised to go with us to-morrow—where the little twisted shells grow, you know!"

"And, mamma!" interrupted Rose, all flushed and breathless, "you'll go with us, won't you? for Miss Chaloner says you can, and get those star-fish for your aquarium!"

"Don't talk so loud, children," said Mrs. Elton, pettishly. "Dear me, how dreadfully sun-burned you all are. Do go in and get on something fit to be seen. I'm afraid you've found them very noisy and troublesome, Miss Chaloner."

"Not at all," said Juliet, pleasantly. "I am very fond of children, you know. And I really think, Mrs. Elton, you would find it a very pleasant walk to-morrow."

"Thank you," said the matron, stiffly, "it would be altogether too far."

"Then, mamma," urged Harry Elton, a manly boy of fourteen, "let me row you, Bessie and Hubert in the boat, and Miss Chaloner will walk with the others."

"I'll think of it," said Mrs. Elton; "only if Miss Chaloner should chance to encounter a spider or a field-mouse by the road, I won't answer for the consequence."

Juliet laughed, but she coloured nevertheless; her constitutional nervousness was rather a sensitive point in her character.

"I was telling Clarence of your dainty little hysterics," went on Mrs. Elton, with polite malice. "If there's anything Clarence respects, it is common sense and courage."

Juliet went into the house without replying, but the heightened spot of colour on either cheek showed that the skilfully directed arrow had reached its mark.

"Does Clarence believe I am a coward? or does he believe me guilty of affectation?" she thought, with the tears hanging on her eyelashes like liquid diamonds. "Oh, what have I ever done, that Mrs. Elton should speak so unkindly to me? If Clarence were only here—but he will come to-morrow night."

And the smiles came back to Juliet's lip as she repeated to herself in a low, loving whisper:

"He will come to-morrow night."

"Mamma," said Harry, bluntly, "why did you speak to Miss Chaloner so spitefully?"

"Little boys shouldn't ask questions," said Mrs. Elton, sharply. "Go in and brush your hair for tea."

"So you have really consented to go to-morrow with us?" said Juliet brightly, as she met Mrs. Elton at the dinner-table next day.

"Yes, to please the children; they are so impudent," said Mrs. Elton, with an air of indifference.

"And, Miss Chaloner," interposed Harry, "I am to row mamma and the little ones, while you walk across the sands with Bessie and Helen, and meet us at five o'clock."

"Then we must start a little in advance of your boating party," said Juliet.

"I suppose so," said Harry. "Oh, mamma, won't it be jolly?"

"Harry!" sighed Mrs. Elton, reprovingly, "when will you learn to study a little elegance in your language?"

How brightly the golden afternoon slipped away upon the velvet-smooth sands! Even Mrs. Elton forgot to be spiteful, but revelled in the beauty of the far-off rocks and sapphire firmament, and owned to herself that "really, Juliet Chaloner was very charming!"

"See, Miss Chaloner!" cried Bessie, ecstatically dancing about on her tip-toes, "the water is creeping all over my shells."

"Don't you see the tide is coming up?" said Harry, eagerly. "Stand up on that high point, and take your shells away quick, unless you want to lose them."

"But, Miss Chaloner," said Helen, wistfully, "the water is ever so high over that narrow neck of land, where we crossed by the old lighthouse; how shall we get back again?"

Juliet laid down the branch of sea-weed she had been admiring with Mrs. Elton, and looked off towards the rising tide, with a cheek suddenly blanching to a dead whiteness.

"Miss Chaloner, what is the matter?" shrieked Mrs. Elton, catching at her shawl.

"We are cut off from the mainland," said Juliet, in a low, clear voice. "The tide is coming up, and half-an-hour from now this point will be submerged. Oh, why did we not think of that? The boat, Harry—quick!"

"But, Miss Chaloner," pleaded thoughtful Bessie, "if we were to run—the water is surely not higher than our waists."

"My dear, the neck of land is half-a-mile away, and the tide is rising at a fearful rate; it would only be a useless risk of our lives to make the attempt. Get into the boat, Mrs. Elton."

"Mamma, mamma!" wailed the children in chorus, while Mrs. Elton, pale, trembling, and incapable of effort, sat on the rock.

"I cannot move!" she stammered. "I think I am going to faint!"

But even while the words were on her lips Juliet's arm encircled her waist, and Juliet's strength guided her to the little boat that lay rocking on the waves, with Harry at the oars. It was very small, containing but two seats, and when Mrs. Elton and her five children were encircled therein, every nook, even to stem and helm, was occupied.

"There is no room for Miss Chaloner!" ejaculated Harry, in blank dismay. "Mamma, Miss Chaloner is not in the boat!"

Mrs. Elton looked feebly around.

"Give me Rosa—let me hold Rosa in my lap," she faltered, scarcely knowing what she said.

But Juliet unloosed the loop of rope that fastened the boat to a projecting point of rock, and flung it out upon the waves.

"The boat is overloaded already," she said, in a strangely calm voice. "Push off, Harry, and row as fast as you can; it grows late, and you are a long distance from home."

The generous heart of the boy rose up with a great, choking throb.

"Miss Chaloner! and leave you here to perish? Never!"

"Listen to me, Harry," she said, hurriedly. "Row home, as fast as you can. Two hours will take you there, and then—then you can send the boat back for me."

And as the words trembled on her tongue, Juliet Chaloner glanced over her shoulder at the white-crested fringes of foam slowly creeping up the sands, and knew that, two hours from that time, it would all be one wild tossing mass of waves!

Yet she smiled, and fluttered her white pocket handkerchief to them, as the heavily freighted boat glided slowly away, and spoke cheering words to the brave little oarsman, even though the chill of death lay cold at her heart.

Slowly the black outline of the boat faded into indistinctness, growing less and less; and when it was hidden from view by the projecting line of the coast, the bitter loneliness of her position came to Juliet Chaloner in all its overwhelming force.

Like a great golden orb the sun hung above the sea; while the blue, cloudless sky smiled overhead. Nature was full of soft, serene repose, and yet Juliet Chaloner stood with clasped hands and silent endurance, waiting for the death which was momentarily drawing nearer and nearer—the stern, relentless death, whose horrors had never seemed so ghastly as now!

She thought how the blue tides would sparkle over her grave—she thought how perchance her corpse would float on the waves, the golden hair all wet and matted—and a cold shudder came over her whole frame.

"And he will be at home to-night," she murmured. "Oh, heaven! surely this is the bitterness of death!"

The thunder of the cruel waves was in her ears—the moaning of the surface—and Juliet Chaloner knew no more.

"Send a boat back to the point?" echoed the old boatman. "Bless your heart, sir! the point is seven feet under water by this time!"

"And Miss Chaloner?" shrieked Mrs. Elton.

"Heaven have mercy on her soul!" solemnly uttered the old old man, taking off his cap. "There is no use in hurrying, ma'am; but I'll get up my boat. We may perhaps bring off her body, if it hasn't drifted too far out."

"Oh, Juliet! Juliet!" gasped Mrs. Elton, wringing her hands, "what shall I say to my brother when he asks for you? You gave up your own life to save ours! And I dared to say that you were a coward!"

The soft light of a shaded lamp fell across Juliet Chaloner's eyes as she opened them with a vague sense of having passed through a wild, troubled dream, and a dim remembrance of thundering tides, and the dizzy rise and fall of waves.

"Where am I?" she murmured. "You here, Clarence? Have we crossed the River of Death, and is this heaven?"

"My own love," tenderly responded the deep, well known tones, "take courage; there are years of hope and happiness before us yet. You would have given your life to save others, but Heaven would not accept the sacrifice."

"But how came I here," she asked, shuddering, as she remembered the slippery sands and the sound of many waters.

And then Clarence Seville told her how, on coming from the station, he had taken a boat. He caught sight of a white object on the sands at the point, where the rising tides were fast circling round the islet of ground. Bidding the boatmen row up to it with all possible speed, he found himself just in time to rescue Juliet Chaloner from a death more horrible than one could well imagine.

"God's hand guided me there, dearest," he said, impressively. "My noble girl, were it possible to love you better than I did before, this act of self-sacrifice would move me to do so."

From that hour Mrs. Elton cherished and revered Miss Chaloner as if she had been a saint; for to her there seemed something more than human in the noble self-abnegation of Juliet's courage.

A. R.

"Great heavens! can this thing be possible?" gasped Festus, agast, "surely it cannot be!"

"Yes. The dire spirit of vengeance hath taken arms against the soul-crushing power of tyranny, and nought can stay the scourge. Long—too long—havo the Greeks been trampled in the dust, their necks beneath the Roman heel, and their backs bruised with cruel stripes. They have begged for mercy in vain; and now they will have right and justice—aye, and Liberty!—or they will find release in death—this night! Ask no more, good master, for I must not stop. You have ever been kind and merciful to your bondmen, and I will save you. And, moreover, wherever is found a Roman noble with a kind and generous heart there is a hand to save him. Come!"

"But the defenceless women?"

"Not a female will be harmed. They are men who are thus awake to their wrongs, and they will hold the gentler sex sacred. To the vault! Wait no longer!"

Thus speaking Narbo took his master by the arm, and solemnly entreated him to obey. Festus hesitated no more, for he began now to realize his danger; nor was he wholly unprepared for this dreadful catastrophe, as the reader already knows. The bondman took up the lamp and led the way, and as they passed out from the strum the merchant asked:

"Has Tyron aught to do with this?"

"No," replied Narbo. "The shrine-maker is not in our counsel, nor has he a hand in the business at all. Still he is a friend of the Greeks, and he knows that this thing has been long contemplated. He would not betray us—be sure of that. But, my lord, have you seen Tyron of late?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because he has not been seen in his shop; and it hath been whispered that he is dead."

Festus was startled by this announcement; but Narbo could give him no farther information, so he was forced to abide in ignorance of the real fate of his friend.

The vault was reached; the master went in, and the true-hearted bondman closed the iron door, and locked it fast.

"At length he comes!" exclaimed the king, as the large door was swung open to give entrance to the priest for whom he had sent the summons. "Good health be thine, most worshipful Albanus. 'Tis an unseemly hour, I know, in the which to summon one like thee; but the case in hand is urgent, and brooks no delay. Shut fast the door, and suffer none to interrupt us."

The priest inclined his head in token of recognition, and then spoke:

"What is the business, sire?"

"A marriage."

"A solemn thing, oh, king. Are the parties—"

"A trace to all queries," interrupted Octavius, impatiently, "It's the prince thou art to marry; so hasten with the ceremony."

"And the lady, sire?"

"Is the daughter of this old man."

Saxones would have appealed to the priest for mercy and forbearance; but he caught the dire look of his monarch, and in it he knew there lurked a death warrant. A moment he hesitated, and then, shivering from head to foot, while agony racked every feature of his aged face, he took his child by the hand and conducted her to the spot where stood the prince.

Protos took Myrrha's cold hand, and the priest threw over their heads a mantle of purple silk, fringed and wrought with gold. His lips were opened for speech, when his eye rested upon Zorah, who had crept to Myrrha's side; and there was something in the expression of her face that seemed to startle him.

"Whose daughter art thou?" he suddenly asked. "Never mind her," urged the king. "She is but a bondmaiden of the Lady Myrrha. Go on."

"Hark!" cried Protos, letting go the hand he held, and bending his ear to listen.

"It's nothing but a band of midnight brawlers," said Octavius, with much vexation. "Their sport is innocent enough. Ha! there sounds the gong upon the main tower! 'Tis midnight, indeed. Hasten—hasten with the ceremony; for by the power of Jupiter I swear, this assembly disperses not until Myrrha is the wife of the prince! The Oracle must be thus fulfilled. On, priest—on with thy work!"

"Great heavens! there is more than midnight brawling of innocence in that!" exclaimed Protos, throwing the bridal canopy from his head, and springing forward. "Hark! Hear those shouts? And, by the power of Pluto! there's clashing of steel within the piazza of the palace!"

The king heard, and turned pale.

"Ho! Without there! Slaves!" he shouted.

Not a lisp in reply indicated the attendance of those whom he called; and again he raised his voice for help.

"By heaven!" he exclaimed, "this smacks of rebellion."

And his knees smote together, while his face blanched.

Myrrha turned to her father; but he was weak and faint with terror. She sought rest and strength, which she could not find here. Next she looked to Zorah. The shrine-maker's daughter was as calm and resolute as though she had been a queen, with all about her willing subjects; and with her embrace the sufferer took refuge.

Octavius started to where, behind the throne, stood a few of his favourite slaves, and in husky tones he bade them hasten out and find the guard. They moved at once to obey; but hardly had they crossed the threshold when they stopped, and turned back.

CHAPTER XVII.

The first low sound that attracted the attention of the prince, had now swollen to a horrid din, and amid the yells and shouts was plainly heard the sharp clang of arms. Nearer and nearer it came—the very air was loaded with the groans and curses—torches flared through the windows; and when the slaves had opened the large doors the glare of red lights poured up from the pavement below.

"The king—the king!" shouted a hundred voices. "Death to the tyrant! Death for those who murder our children! On—on! The king—the king."

"Flee!" uttered Potos, grasping his father by the arm, and essaying to pull him towards a small side door.

They leaped to the door, but it was locked upon the outside! They turned, and the thundering of voices was in the passage. On the next instant the insurgents rushed into the apartment. Hand to hand stood the King's own slaves; but they fought against men who were panting for liberty, and in a single minute the last man of them was borne back upon the sword point.

"The king!" cried one who led the rest, forcing his way in with determined stride; "down with the tyrant!" And as he thus spoke, he pressed upon his monarch.

The affrighted Octavius begged, but none heard him; he swung his short dagger frantically in the air, but even while he did so, the avenging steel of the foremost warrior pierced his breast. The prince fell beneath a dozen strokes of as many swords, and then the avengers looked around upon those who stood aside. The priest they would not touch—the girls were sacred by their oath, but upon old Saxones they looked with flashing eyes.

"Whom have we here?" cried one.

"Down with him!" shouted those behind. "He is a Roman noble!"

"Hold! Back! Touch not a hair of that man's head!" exclaimed Zorah, springing between Saxones and the slaves.

"Down with him! He should not be here in secret with the king!" yelled a dozen voices, and the angry strife waxed hotter. "Aye, down with him!" and a score of bright, sharp swords were raised for the old man's life.

"Freemen of Pompeii, stand back!" at this moment came in deep, thunder tones from the large doorway.

At the sound of that voice every sword dropped, and even the king was startled back to life, for he bent forward from the wall against which he had fallen, and with a deep groan he strained his rolling eyes in the direction from whence the voice had come.

Instinctively the insurgents fell back on either hand, and up through the passage thus formed stalked the giant form of Tyron. On the instant, Zorah, sprang forward, and fell upon her father's bosom, while Myrrha, with a movement equally as impulsive, clasped her hands together and thanked the great God that she was saved, for in that strange man she knew she beheld one who was able to deliver her.

"Oh, God!" fell in despairing accents from the lips of the dying king, as he placed his left hand hard upon his bleeding wound, while with the other he supported himself from falling. "Has death itself turned treacherous? Does the grave turn forth rebellion? Do the mouldering bones of the pit take to themselves flesh and life, and pass before me thus in battle form? Tyron! Tyron! Why art thou thus come untimely from thy tomb?"

"Octavius," returned the armourer, as he stepped to the side of the king, "I told thee we should meet again."

"I remember—but how art thou alive?"
"I have not been dead."

"That must be false," uttered Octavius, vainly endeavouring to raise himself farther up. I saw thee dead, and I saw thee buried, and now the grave has sent thee forth to lead on this most foul rebellion. Oh—oh! What powers have combined against me?"

"Octavius," pronounced Tyron, in accents of deep distinctness, "with this rebellion I have nothing to do. Not one word of mine has gone to kindle this spark in the bosoms of the Roman people; but it had been your own wickedness and lust—your own iron grasp of wilful wrong—the curse of your wicked satellites. I had a different power from this to have hurled against your head, had need have been, and though its results might not have been so fearful in their extent, yet upon you they would have had the same weight. I have long seen the clouds that penetrated this storm, but I lent not my breath to fan them up. No, wicked man, I have rather endeavoured to keep back this result by reforming the abuses that have led to it. The powers that have combined against you are nothing but the determination of your people to be from the curse you have heaped upon them."

"But who art thou? O, tell me. Did I not see thee dead?"

The monarch's eyes rolled wildly in the sockets as he spoke, and the hand that was pressed upon the bleeding wound relaxed from its office. The people gathered anxiously around the spot; they forgot the source of the din that raged without, for they would know the solution of this strange mystery; even the great master-spirit of the insurrection thought not now of the office he held.

"You did not see me dead," answered Tyron. "Twas the priest of Hercules you saw. His body lay cold before your gloating eyes, not mine. Albanus is no more!"

"What mystery is this? What—what fated conjunction gave him those features?"

"He bore them from his mother," said Tyron while a shade passed over his face. "The same mother gave us both birth, and we both saw the light at the same hour. The priest was named Tyron Albanus; I am another Tyron!"

"Another Tyron!" iterated the monarch, removing his left hand from the wound, and raising it tremblingly towards the wonderful man. "You are not the—the—"

Octavius lips trembled in vain to finish the sentence—a look of awe and reverence was blended with the death struggle—the last syllable ended in a low, gurgling sound—and the fallen monarch rolled over upon the gory pavement. Pompeii had no king!

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

SMART CHILD: A little bright eyed girl, three years old, looked up to its father, and said: "Father, I have got three tongues, isn't I?" "No, my child, you have only one." "Yes, I have." "Well, where are they?" "One is in my head, and two in my shoes."

PERSONAL.

Individual on Seat (to Stout Friend).—"Why, that's Tomkins! I thought you were very thick with him?"

Stout Party.—"Oh no, he's only a slight acquaintance."

"THEY say cotton is declining," exclaimed an old lady, as she removed her spectacles, and laid down her paper. "I thought so," she continued, "for the last thread I used was very feeble."

SCENE.—MARKET.

Gent.—"My good woman, how much is that goose?"

Market Woman.—"Well, you may have them two at seven shillin'."

Gent.—"But I only want one."

Woman.—"Can't help it; ain't goin' to sell one without the other. Them ere geese, to my certain knowledge, hev been together for more'n fifteen year, and I ain't goin' to be so unfeelin' as to separate them now."

SOME gentlemen were in a tavern, and at the height of their jollity in came a friend of theirs, whose name was Samson. "Ah," said one, "we may now be securely merry, fearing not the officers of the law, for though a thousand such Philistines should come here is a Samson, who is able to brain them all."

"Sir," replied Samson "I may boldly venture on as

many as you speak of, provided you lend me one of your jaw bones."

COUSINING.

A country gentleman lately arrived in London and immediately repaired to the house of a relative, a lady who had married a merchant of that city. The parties were glad to see him and invited him to their house as a home, as he declared his intention of remaining in that city but a day or two.

The husband of the lady, anxious to show his attention to a relative and a friend of his wife, took the gentleman's horse to a livery stable in Hanover Street.

Finally the visit became a visitation, and the merchant, after the lapse of eleven days, besides lodging and boarding the gentleman, a pretty considerable bill had run up at the livery stable.

Accordingly he went to the man who kept the stable, and told him when the gentleman took the horse he would pay the bill.

"Very good, sir," said the stable-keeper, "I understand you."

Accordingly in a short time, the country gentleman went to the stable and ordered his horse to be got ready. The bill, of course, was presented.

"Oh!" said the gentleman, "Mr. —— my relative will pay this."

"Very well, sir," said the stable-keeper, "please get an order from Mr. ——, it will be the same as the money."

The horse was put up again, and down went the country gentleman to the merchant.

"Well," said he, "I am going now."

"Are you?" said the merchant, "well, good by, sir."

"Well, about the horse; the man said the horse must be paid for his keeping."

"Well, I suppose that's all right."

"Yes—well, but you know I'm your wife's cousin."

"Yes," said the merchant, "I know you are, but your horse is not!"

THE PUZZLED MONK.

"How is the wind, Jack?" asked the captain of a ship, addressing the man at the helm.

"North east by north, sir," was the instantaneous answer of the tar.

A jocular monk, who was a passenger, drew near the sailor.

"My son," said he to him; "I heard thee swear like a demon in the storm; dost thou know thy prayer as well as the sea compass."

"No," replied Jack, "for I can tell you that I know my compass a great deal better than even you know your prayers."

"Thou art joking, my son."

"Quite in earnest."

Upon this our tar began as follows:

"North by east, north east," and so on, till he had gone around and come to north again.

"Now, said Jack, 'tis your turn."

The monk recited his *pater noster* in a very ready manner.

"That is clever," observed the son of Neptune; "tis turn now." He went on, north, north by west, etc., till he came to north again.

"Well," said he with a grin, "give us your prayers backwards."

"Backwards! I can't, boy. I never learned it but one way; it is not necessary."

"Then," observed the triumphant sailor, "I know my compass better than you know your prayers, for I can tell it a thousand ways."

A VERY good story has been revived in Nottingham during the past week. Smith is a gentleman, who, in the course of business, has to travel about a great deal. Shortly after he had returned from a tour in America, he was talking in the bar of an hotel about some of the wonderful adventures he had met with during his last journey in the "States." "Why, look here," said Smith, "when I left Washington last May there was in the same carriage with me a lady, dressed in deep mourning, almost crying her eyes out. I asked who she was, and was told Mrs. Davis, wife of Jeff. Davis, and that she had been to Washington to see President Johnson, to get leave to have an interview with her husband, at that time a prisoner in one of the Federal fortresses. That brute, Johnson, had refused to give her permission. No sooner did I hear this than I went and sat beside Mrs. Davis, and told her to be comforted, for if she wished, I would go back to Washington and use my influence with Johnson to get her leave to see Jeff. She thanked me, and said she would be glad if I would. At the next station I got out,

went back to Washington by first train, saw Johnson, persuaded him to allow Mrs. Davis to see Jeff, and sent word on to Mrs. Davis of what I had done." "Yes," said Brown, who was sitting by while Smith told his story—"yes, that's a good deal like a thing that happened to me the last time I was coming from Scotland. I got out at Newcastle-on-Tyne to get something to eat, and I was walking up and down the platform in a precious fume when up comes the Queen's train from Perth, with the Court inside. The Queen puts her head out of the window, sees me, sends a lord-in-waiting to see who I was. I told him my name was Brown, from Nottingham, that I had missed my train, and was anxious to get on to Grantham as soon as I could. The Queen sent for me to go into the Royal carriage. I went. They were all very friendly, gave me some lunch, talked a good deal, and when they put me out at Grantham shook hands all round. I never saw a nicer person than the Queen—so kind and so motherly." "I say Brown," said Smith, "it strikes me that story of yours is a—lie." "Well, Smith," replied Brown, quite coolly, "I don't deny that; but at least it's better than yours."

MISTAKEN JEALOUSY.

It is not often that people are mistaken on a mere question of identity, but sometimes such things will occur. A very amusing incident arising from this cause occurred recently. A lady, about entering a street car, saw, as she supposed, her husband taking tender leave of another woman on a street corner near by. Having heard repeated rumours of his gallantries, she determined to settle the matter definitely. With a rather hasty judgment, she rapidly regained the street and approached the lady, who, standing at the corner, was still looking after the gentleman, who had gone into the store.

"You seem to be very well acquainted with that gentleman?" was her sudden, unexpected salutation.

"Madam!" was the surprised rejoinder, accompanied by a look which clearly denoted her suspicions of the questioner's sanity.

"I say you appear to be acquainted with that gentleman?"

"Well, yes—somewhat."

"How long have you known him?"

"A number of years. He's my husband?"

"Indeed! He's mine, too!"

"What do you mean?" cried the lady, evidently much excited.

"Just what I say. He's my husband."

The lady darted into the shop, and the next moment reappeared with the unfortunate Benedict.

"William, this lady says you are her husband?"

One glance, however, was sufficient; the lady saw that she was wrong, and crying with vexation and shame, frankly confessed her mistake.

WHY is a rabbit like some of our M.P.s—Because he sneaks into Burrows!—Judy.

WHAT a lot of money they would make if Father Thames had to pay dog-tax!—Judy.

GOOD GRACIOUS!

Scene—the Park. Evening—The Fashionable Bathing Hour.

Chimney Ornament (to small-sized gent he has just nudged playfully with a sooty brush): "Beg pardon, mate; but was you and that there young female a-goin' to stop much longer? 'Cause I'm about peelin' for a dip, and in general I leaves my togs on this 'ere seat, with the daug to keep his eye on em."

Ezual small gent and young lady, who are strangers to each other, in opposite directions—much confus'd.—Judy.

MUSICAL MEM.—A good many of our modern "songs" thoroughly deserve to be called "strains," they put one out so terribly.—Fun.

CHIGNONS AND TURBANS.—An Indian paper states that horses have recently been seen in the streets adorned with turbans. We suppose they are wearing head gear as some compensation for the thinning their tails undergo to supply the fashionable headgear of the fair.—Fun.

CROSS QUESTIONS AND AMIABLE ANSWERS.—At a recent "Woman's Rights" meeting in New York a Miss Upham opened her speech by saying she was a woman, who was not married, never had been, and probably (echo answers that very decidedly—"probably") never would be. She then asked the following riddles: "Who am I? What am I? Where am I? Am I a citizen, or am I not? Where do women stand? Or do we, like Mohammed's coffin, hang in mid-air?" We think we have got the answers. "Who am I?" Miss very much Up-ham! "What am I?" A decided old maid, on your own showing. "Where am I?" Not in England, thank goodness. "Am I a citizen or am I not?" Guess not—try

"citizeness" or "citizen in petticoats." "Where do women stand? Or do we, like Mohammed's coffin, hang in mid-air?" Of course you do—where else would angels—and all women are angels of one sort or another—expect to be, but in mid-air?—Fun.

DIPLOMATIC.—It is rumoured that one of the conditions on which Mr. Motley is instructed to insist with regard to the settlement of the Alabama claims is that we shall receive George Francis Train in England—and keep him here. The condition is a hard one, but then the great Vance is going to America, so that may be accounted to strike the balance.—Fun.

OFF THE NEEDLES.—A Tailor who has made money (some tailors do), and wishes to measure himself against other rich men, should take to yachting and get a cutter.—Punch.

NO LONGER A FAULT.—Ladies who have the privilege of offering their charitable contributions in the presence of a gracious and charming Princess, may be pardoned if they feel a little purse-proud on the occasion. (N.B. The gentlemen who attend them should be slim in figure, not puffy.)—Punch.

HAPPINESS.

WHEN are we happiest? When the light of morn wakes the young roses from their crimson rest; When cheerful sounds, upon the fresh winds borne,

Till man resumes his work with blither zest, While the bright waters leap from rock to glen—

Are we the happiest then?

When are we happiest? in the crowded hall, When Fortune smiles, and flatterers bend the knee?

How soon—how very soon—such pleasures pall! How fast must Falsehood's rainbow-colouring flee;

Its poison flowers leave the sting of care: We are not happy there!

Are we the happiest, when the evening hearth is circled with its crown of living flowers?

When goeth round the laugh of harmless mirth, And when affection from her bright urn showers Her richest balm on the dilating heart? Bliss! is it there thou art?

Oh, no! not there; it would be happiness

Almost like heaven's, if it might always be, Those brows without one shading of distress, And wanting nothing but eternity;

But they are things of earth, and pass away—

They must, they must decay!

When are we happiest, then? oh! when resign'd To whatsoe'er our cup of life may bring;

When we can know ourselves but weak and blind, Creatures of earth! and trust alone in Him Who giveth, in His mercy, joy or pain.

Oh, we are happiest then!

M. A. B.

GEMS.

TWO lovers, like two armies, generally get along quietly enough till they are engaged.

EVERY time you avoid doing wrong you increase your inclination to do that which is right.

WHEN our desires are fulfilled to the very letter we always find some mistake which renders them anything but what we expected.

SUCCESS in life is very apt to make us forget the time when we were not much. It is just so with a frog on a jump; he cannot remember when he was a tadpole but other folks can.

A RICH man one day asked a man of wit what sort of a thing opulence was. "It is a thing," replied the philosopher, "which can give a rascal the advantage over an honest man."

STATISTICS.

THE POST OFFICE.—The Postmaster-General has issued his fifteenth annual report. His lordship says: "In presenting to your lordships the fifteenth annual report upon the Post Office, I am desirous, at the outset, of removing what appears to be a very general misconception. It consists in the idea, the origin of which is no doubt to be sought in the returns of revenue and expenditure as published quarterly, that the year 1868 as compared with 1867 shows a decrease in the receipts of the Post Office. Your lordships are aware that the apparent falling off is nothing more than a matter of account, the result of a new arrangement, by virtue of which the Post Office no longer receives postage upon the letters of public departments. In the receipts of the year 1867 this postage was set down as 232,151L.

whilst in 1868 only 14,797L had been credited to this head at the time of the change; if the respective amounts be deducted from the receipts of the years to which they apply, the result will be as follows—viz., Receipts—1867: 4,548,129L (deduct postage of public departments, 232,461L), 4,315,668L. 1868: 4,566,882L (deduct postage of public departments, 14,797L) 4,552,085L; increase in 1868, 236,417L. The number of letters delivered in 1867 in the United Kingdom was 774,821,000; in 1868, 808,118,000. Number of book packets, newspapers, and pattern packets delivered in 1867, 102,273,801; in 1868, 105,845,000. Amount of money orders issued in 1867, 19,282,100L; in 1868, 19,079,162. Post Office Savings Bank: Number of depositors in 1867, 854,983; in 1868, 965,154. Balance due to depositors on December 31, 1867, 9,749,929; December 31, 1868, 11,666,655."

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

DRYING HERBS FOR THE WINTER.—Parsley should be dried quickly, when it becomes quite crisp, still preserving its bright green colour; it then should be rubbed to powder between the hands, and preserved in well-corked bottles. As thus prepared it is the most useful article in the kitchen, a teaspoonful (equal to a large handful of fresh parsley) being always ready, without the trouble of chopping, for making stuffing, parsley and butter, &c., and is fully equal to the fresh herb for these purposes. Mint does not dry well, losing its colour; but some should be prepared, as it is required for pea-soup, &c. For mint sauce our plan is different; we chop the fresh leaves finely, and pour on the strongest vinegar. As thus preserved it can be used with early lamb when no fresh mint is to be obtained except that forced in hot-beds. Tarragon may be preserved in vinegar like mint, if required for use in a chopped state. Sage, marjoram, and the other herbs are best dried quickly, then rubbed or chopped small, and tightly corked in bottles or preserved in tin boxes. If tied up in bundles in the usual way, and hung up in the smoke and dust of the kitchen, they soon lose their flavour, and become next to useless. Shallots and garlic should be kept in a cold, dry place, to prevent their sprouting. By the aid of a little discreet care the cook may have her seasoning herbs in good order all the year round.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A TAX on pianofortes is seriously proposed in north Germany.

THE death is announced of Dr. Carus, President of the Academy of Sciences at Dresden, and a man of high repute for his philosophical works.

THERE are 5,429 Smiths who received dividends on various sums in the public stocks; 2,478 Browns are also among the distinguished quarter of a million, and 2,190 bear the name of Jones.

THE choir of the Exeter Cathedral is to be restored by Mr. Gilbert Scott, at a cost of upwards of 12,000L, towards which the Chapter subscribes 3,000L, the Bishop of Exeter 1,300L, and the Dean 1,000L.

THIRTY thousand miners have sought Government inquiry into the late fatal mine accidents, and it is hoped that increased guarantees of their safety will in some form result from the action the miners are thus taking.

A SEVERE earthquake was experienced in Christchurch, New Zealand, on the 5th and four following days. Nearly all the brick and stone buildings were shaken, and numerous chimneys were thrown down. No lives were lost.

UNDERGROUND TRAVELLING IN LONDON.—The total number of passengers using the Metropolitan, the Metropolitan District, the St. John's Wood, and the Hampstead and City lines during the half-year ending June 30th, 1869, was 20,087,809.

The bell of Notre Dame Cathedral, at Paris, cast in 1680, weighs 30,000 lb., that of St. Peter's at Rome, weighs 17,000 lb.; that of Notre Dame Cathedral, Montreal—the largest in America—29,000 lb.; and that of the Parliament House, in London, 30,000 lb.

Within eight years there have been built in San Francisco 25 new Protestant houses of worship, as follows: Baptist, 4; Congregational, 3; Episcopal, 4; Methodist, 7; Presbyterian, 7; also one mariners', one Lutheran, and one New Jerusalem.

THERE is living at Sapperton, at the head of the Golden Valley, a hale old man named Thomas Fisher, who is 106 years old. He has spent all his days at Sapperton, and belongs to the labouring class. The parish register contains an entry of his baptism 101 years ago, and he was some years old when the ceremony was performed.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CASSIUS.—We cannot give you an opinion on the matter.

A. R.—We cannot give you the information. Consult a shipping list.

EMMA HOPE.—Consult our back numbers and you will find the recipe.

NELL.—It would be more correct to say "intends to get married."

CLARENCE S.—"Two Champions" and "Day's Life" are not up to our standard.

F. C. K.—Apply to a glazier for the information; he may, perhaps, give you a practical example.

EVELYN.—The prettiest contraction for Cornelia is, we think. Nima. Corny does not sound elegant.

LEONARD M.—We have already given every information on the subject. Consult our back numbers for the last month.

INDIAN ROSE.—If he ill-treats you so much a magistrate will give you a protection order; then do as your parents advise.

W. B. (Liverpool).—We could not recommend any particular regiment or branch of the service. Apply to a recruiting sergeant.

ISABELLA.—It is not fashionable in England for ladies to ride on velocipedes. They do so in France, but we do not think the practice graceful.

AN ENGLISHMAN.—1. Only in exceptional cases are Englishmen admitted into the French army: 2. There is a greater chance of speedy promotion, but the comforts are not greater. 3. Handwriting legible and clerky.

ELMIRE.—We would not satisfy your morbid curiosity if it were not to dispel the idea that the person referred to is what your friend says he is. His occupation is an unfortunate one; but we know that he is a thoroughly respectable man.

PETER B.—If a landlord covenant to repair, and neglect to do so, the tenant may do it, and withhold so much of the rent. But it is advisable that notice thereof should be given by the tenant to the landlord in the presence of a witness, prior to commencing the repairs.

ALBION JUNIOR.—1. You will obtain all the particulars at the head office, Scotland Yard, London. Write to the superintendent for the necessary form of application. We think you would be very eligible. 2. Send the manuscript, and we shall give it every consideration.

RAFFLES.—It is not so easy to pick up young ladies with a few thousand pounds as wives. We would advise you to be more moderate in your desires. No man of spirit would descend to be a fortune-hunter, or be afraid of trusting to the honest toil of his heart and brain for success in life.

OLIVE.—The treasures of nature are generally unveiled by chance. A dog coloured his muzzle with a crushed purple snail, and the true purple was discovered. A couple of wild buffaloes fought upon America's auriferous ground, and their horns tore up the turf which concealed the rich golden vein.

ROWENA.—Try and overcome your parents' prejudice. Let the young man come forward boldly and answer any charges which may be made against him. If he is respectable and likely to make you a good husband, we do not see why your courtship should be conducted clandestinely.

THE ANXIOUS ONE.—1. You must try and have more confidence in yourself. Since the lady is, as you say, warm-hearted and generous, she will not accuse you of anything unjustly. Collect your thoughts well before you reply, and do not be in a hurry. 2. Handwriting very good.

PERITRAX.—The disharmony of life consists in the fact that we perceive only an insignificant portion of that life—the state of being upon earth; there must therefore be a continued existence—an immortality. Harmonical beauty is an instinct in us; it lies in our eye, in our ear, the bridges of the soul to the created around us.

A THREE YEARS' WIFE.—We think your husband is acting very wrongly, and if remonstrance will not do, you ought to get a magistrate to convince him that the rod may be very well for a child, but that it must not be used in the case of a wife. We have a different opinion as to your husband's nobility of character.

OLIPHANT GOLDFNEY writes to inform us that he is cursed with a bad temper, which is not only a bane to himself but is productive of misery to his wife and family. He naively proceeds to say that instead of being loved

and revered by his wife and children, he is dreaded and, as he surmises, detested, a gloom coming over his household whenever he appears. Oliphant Goldney does not like this, and with a spurious frankness says that possibly he is "too severe sometimes." If he would be less severe by half, things might be changed. We dare say Oliphant Goldney is considered a fine fellow out of doors. We have no sympathy with domestic autocrats.

R. T.—It is a common idea that the art of writing and the art of conversation are one. A man of genius may be a very dull talker. The two grand modes of making your conversation interesting are to enliven it by recitals calculated to affect and impress your hearers, and to intersperse it with anecdotes and smart things.

LEATHER STOCKING.—An adhesive material for uniting the parts of boots and shoes, and for the seams of articles of clothing may be made thus: Take one pound of gutta percha, four ounces of India rubber, two ounces of pitch, one ounce of shellac, two ounces of oil; the ingredients are to be melted together, and used hot.

GEOPHAGA.—Maps, charts, or engravings may be effectively varnished by brushing a very delicate coating of gutta percha solution over their surface. It is perfectly transparent, and is said to improve the appearance of pictures. By coating both sides of important documents, they can be kept waterproof, and preserved perfectly.

AN ANXIOUS UNCLE.—If you intend the lad for a commercial career you could not do better than take him from school and get him into a merchant's office. He will then be initiated into the rudiments of his business, and learn by actual practice far more than in a commercial college. French and German are more useful than Latin or Greek.

B. S.—Lanscraig is in the south of Scotland. It was there where the forces of the regent of Scotland, the Earl of Murray, defeated the army of Mary, Queen of Scots, May 13, 1568. Mary fled to England, and crossed the Solway Firth, landing at Workington, in Cumberland, May 16. Soon afterwards she was imprisoned by Elizabeth.

AMONG THE HILLS.

Have you seen my cottage among the hills,
Where brooklets ripples, and sunbeams stray
'Mong dancing leaves where the robin trills
With untaught gladness, its roundelay?
And glad and blithe on the dappled green,
My merry children go tripping light,
O'er bright eyed blossom looking between
The tufted grasses all fresh and bright;
Where love is sinless, and guile is not,
And the star of peace shines o'er the spot?

Have you seen a form that awaits me there,
When the day is done, and my cares are o'er—
A lovely woman with silver hair,
Who watches for me at the door?
And her voice is sweet as the summer wind,
And a soul whose powers were formed to bind
My spirit with joyous melody.
Have you seen my Eden among the hills,
Where all my being with rapture thrills?

C. D.

MAXIMILIAN.—To cure your sprain: Put the white of an egg into a sancer; keep stirring it with a piece of alum about the size of a walnut, until it becomes a thick jelly; apply a portion of it on a piece of lint or tow, large enough to cover the sprain, clamping it to a fresh one as often as it feels warm or dry; the limb is to be kept in a horizontal position by placing it on a chair.

ORLANDO.—There is a mighty difference between what you call "dignified reticence" and that self-assertion which requires that a man, falsely accused, should give speech and vindicate himself from a false accusation. However great your contempt may be for the authors of the scandal, you ought, for the sake of yourself and your friends, to refute it.

CARRIE AND LINDA.—Carrie is a sensible girl, and we cannot but commend her for refusing to disfigure herself by the monstrosities of the period, which will speedily disappear, leaving behind a stigma upon the persons who originated and adopted them. We advise Linda to study on answer to Carrie, to follow her example, and become once more as worthy of admiration as she is.

VULNA.—In ancient times mirrors were made of metal; those of the Jewish women, of brass. Mirrors in silver were introduced by Praxiteles, 323 B.C. Mirrors or looking-glasses were made at Venice, A.D. 1300; and in England, at Lambeth, near London, in 1673. The improvements in manufacturing plate-glass, and that of very large size, has cheapened looking-glasses very much.

QUINA.—To recover the equanimity and composure of your husband you must make his home a place of repose, of peace, of cheerfulness, and of comfort. By this means his soul will revive its strength again, and he will go forth with fresh vigour to encounter the labour and troubles of life. But if he finds bad temper and sullenness at home, he will become discouraged and despairing.

FLOWER POT.—1. To protect dahlias from earwigs: Dip a piece of wool or cotton in oil, and slightly tie it round the stalk, about a foot from the earth. The stakes which you put into the ground to support your plants must also be surrounded by the oiled cotton or wool, or the insects will climb up them to the blossoms and tender shoots of the stems. 2. A garden syringe or engine, with a cap on the pipe full of very minute holes, will wash away caterpillars very quickly.

GENTLEWOMAN.—1. The masters and mistresses of manor-houses, in former times, served out bread to the poor weekly, and were therefore called *Leffards* and *Leffdays*, signifying bread-givers (from *leif*, a loaf); hence Lords and Ladies. Tooke considers Lord to signify high-born. Ladies first came into court in France in 1492. 2. Lady Day (March 25), a festival instituted about 450, according to some authorities, and not before the 7th century according to others.

MILDRED.—Under the circumstances we would advise you to remain with your parents for two or three years longer. Both yourself and your affianced evidently see

that this is the better course to pursue; but by deliberating too long upon the matter you will be apt to throw prudence to the winds and embark upon the perilous ocean of matrimony without sufficient ballast to make smooth sailing. Have patience, and as the Scotch say "bide a wee." You will not regret it in the future.

CLAUDE BARSON.—There is certainly nothing disgraceful in keeping boarders if you cannot afford to keep the whole of the house to yourself. If you detest the idea so much why don't you take a smaller house, or go into apartments. Your wife would find it very fatiguing and harassing work to keep a young girl's school. As you say she is an accomplished player on the pianoforte, it would not be a bad idea to remove from your present address into some genteel suburb, and allow your wife to give music lessons, either at a reasonable walking distance or in your own home.

CALEDONIAN.—The Gowrie conspiracy was this. A young Scotch nobleman, John, Earl of Gowrie in 1600, reckoning on the support of the burghs and the kirk, conspired to dethrone James VI. and the Government. For this purpose he decoyed the king into Gowrie House, in Perth, on Aug. 6, 1600. The plot was frustrated, and the earl and his brother, Alexander Ruthven, were slain on the spot. At the time many persons believed that the young men were the victims rather than the authors of the plot. Their father, William, was treacherously executed in 1584 for his share in the raid of Ruthven, in 1582; and he and his father, Patrick, were among the assassins of Bizzio, in 1586.

SUFFERER FROM INDIGESTION.—Although it is of consequence to the debilitated to go early to bed, there are few things more hurtful to them than remaining in it too long. Getting up an hour or two earlier often gives a degree of vigour which nothing else can procure. For those who are not much debilitated and sleep well, the best rule is to get out of bed soon after waking in the morning. This, at first, may appear too early, for the debilitated require more sleep than the healthy; but rising early will gradually prolong on the succeeding night till the quantity the patient enjoys is equal to his demand for it. Lying late is not only hurtful, by the relaxation it occasions, but also by occupying that portion of the day at which exercise is most beneficial.

KATTIE.—We are sorry that you were prompted to write such a letter. You are very much in the wrong, and evidently prize your own beauty and cleverness more than doing your duty to those who have the first claim on your obedience and affection. It is a bad thing to see families where the mother is the drudge, the daughters, meanwhile, reclining indolently on the sofa, taxing their mothers patience to the utmost, sulky and ill-tempered if every whim is not gratified, and all smiles upon the arrival of a visitor, declaring that dear mamma will do this and that, and is never so happy as when she is busy in domestic affairs. There is nothing so contemptible as such hollow professions, and we would advise you, Kattie, to think more of your kind parents and less of self, if you wish to find true happiness.

SISTER A.—Convents were first founded, according to some authorities, 270. The first in England was erected at Folkestone, by Eodwald, in 630. The first in Scotland was at Coldingham, where Ethelreda took the veil, in 670. They were founded earlier than this last date in Ireland. They were suppressed in England in various reigns, particularly in that of Henry VIII., and few existed in Great Britain till lately. A very great number have been suppressed in Europe in the present century. The Emperor of Russia abolished 187 convents of monks by an ukase, dated July 31, 1832. The King of Prussia followed his example, and secularised all the convents in the duchy of Posen. Don Pedro put down 300 convents in Portugal, in 1831; and Sardinia has abolished 1,800 convents. Many were abolished in Italy and Sicily in 1860 and 1861, and in Russia in Nov. 1864.

VERNON CUTTHWAITE.—We need hardly say that we do not approve of duelling—so far we agree with you; but when you express your conviction that "boxing, or the use of the gloves" ought to be taught in the public schools, we entirely disagree with you. It is a great mistake to suppose for one moment that in this advanced state of civilisation it is necessary for every man to have sufficient knowledge of a bare fist in order that on the slightest provocation he will be competent to inflict grievous personal injury on his neighbour. A wise legislation has supplied every remedy for grievances, the nature of which you indicate. The teaching of the ring tends to make men cowards, gives a stimulus to their brutal passions, and in too many instances forces quarrels which need never take place; just as when two nations confront each other armed to the teeth it requires very little to make a *casus belli*.

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